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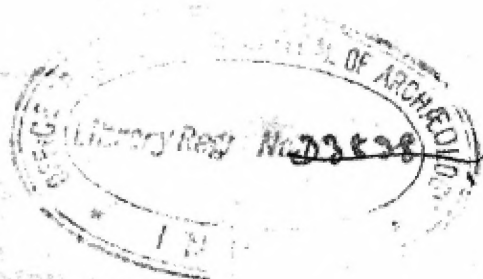
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KING KANISHKA.

# ANCIENT AND HINDU INDIA

Being Part I

of the

*Oxford History of India*

14193<sub>by</sub>

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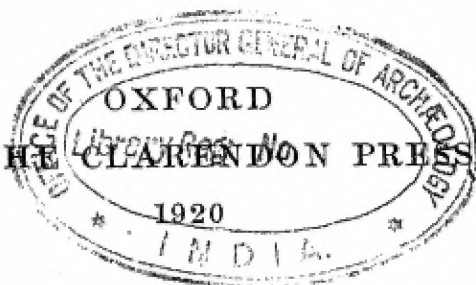
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TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN BOMBAY

HUMPHREY MILFORD

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

## FROM THE PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is to provide in one volume of moderate bulk and price a compendious up-to-date History of India as a whole, based on the results of modern research and extending from the earliest times to the end of 1911. It has been designed with the desire to preserve due proportion throughout in the Ancient, Hindu, Muhammadan, and British Periods alike, the space being carefully allotted so as to give prominence to the more significant sections. The author has sought to attain scrupulous accuracy of statement and impartiality of judgement, so far as may be. The subject has engaged his attention for nearly half a century.

While foot-notes have been confined within narrow bounds, the authorities used are indicated with considerable fullness. The lists of authorities are not intended to be bibliographies. They merely mention the publications actually consulted. Chronological tables, maps, and other aids for the special benefit of professed students have been provided, but it is hoped that the volume may prove readable by and useful to all persons who desire to possess some knowledge of Indian history and do not find a mere school-book sufficient. No book on lines at all similar is in existence. The older works of Meadows Taylor, Marshman, and other authors are necessarily useless for the Hindu Period, which was treated consecutively and critically for the first time in the *Early History of India*, published originally in 1904, and revised in subsequent editions. . . .

Notwithstanding the obvious truism that no man can be master in equal degrees of all the parts of India's long story, it is desirable in my opinion that a general history should be the work of a single author. Composite histories, built up of chapters by specialists, suffer from the lack of literary unity and from the absence of one controlling mind so severely that their gain in erudition is apt to be outweighed by their dullness. . . .

## FROM THE PREFACE

The spelling of Asiatic words and names follows the principle observed in my work on Akbar, with, perhaps, a slight further indulgence in popular literary forms. The only diacritical mark used as a general rule is that placed over long vowels, and intended as a guide to the approximate pronunciation. Consonants are to be pronounced as in English, Vowels usually have the Italian sounds, so that *Mir* is to be read as 'Meer' and *Mūl*- as 'Mool-'. Short *a* with stress is pronounced like *u* in 'but', and when without stress as an indistinct vowel like the *A* in 'America'. The name *Akbar* consequently is pronounced 'Ukbur' or 'Ukber'. No simpler system is practicable, for we cannot revert to the barbarisms of the old books.

Much research and care have been devoted to the collection and reproductions of the numerous illustrations.

My acknowledgements are due to the Secretary of State for India for general liberty to use illustrations in official publications; and to B. Lewis Rice, Esq., C.I.E. for the use of two illustrations from *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions*. . . .

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NOTE.—As the book probably will be used in colleges, it seems well to say that the two sections of the Introduction are not intended for junior students, who may leave them unread.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE relevant entries in the list of Additions and Corrections printed in the first edition of the whole work have now been incorporated with the text and notes.

The opportunity has been taken by the author to rectify sundry minute slips or errors, and to insert a few additional references. The principal corrections of matters of fact will be found on pages xvi *note* ; 47, line 2 ; 58 *note* ; 68 *note* ; 77, first para. ; 110, version ; 174, 175 ; and 213 *note*.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- A. C.—After Christ.  
 A. D.—Anno Domini.  
 A. H.—Anno Hijrae (Hegirae).<sup>1</sup>  
*Āin*.—*Āin-i Akbarī*, by Abu-l Fazl, transl. Blochmann and Jarrett.  
 A. S.—Archaeological Survey.  
 A. S. B.—Asiatic Society of Bengal.  
 A. S. W. I.—Archaeological Survey of Western India.  
 A. V.—*Atharvaveda*.  
 B. C.—Before Christ.  
 B. M.—British Museum.  
*E. H. I.*—*The Early History of India*, by Vincent A. Smith, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1914).  
 E. I. Co.—East India Company.  
*Ep. Ind.*—*Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta, in progress.  
*Gaz.*—*Gazetteer*.  
*H. F. A.*—*A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, by Vincent A. Smith (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911).  
*I. G.*—*Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1907, 1908).  
*Ind. Ant.*—*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, 1872 to date.  
*J. & Proc. A. S. B.*—*Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.  
*J. As.*—*Journal Asiatique*, Paris.  
*J. A. S. B.*—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta.  
*J. B. O. (or J. B. & O.) Res. Soc.*—*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*.  
*J. I. A.*—*Journal of Indian Art and Industry*.  
*J. P. H. S.*—*Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*.  
*J. R. A. S.*—*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London.  
 MM.—*Mahāmahopādhyāya*, a title.  
*Proc. A. S. B.*—*Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.  
*Prog. (Progr.) Rep.*—*Progress Report*.  
 R. V.—*Rigveda*.  
 S. B. E.—*Sacred Books of the East*.

NOTE.—An index number above the title of a book indicates the edition; e. g., *Annals of Rural Bengal*<sup>7</sup> means the 7th edition of that work.

<sup>1</sup> The word *hijra* is rendered by 'withdrawal' more precisely than by 'flight', the equivalent usually given.

# INTRODUCTION

## SECTION 1

The geographical foundation ; diversity in unity and unity in diversity ; the scenes and periods of the story ; sea-power ; forms of government ; the history of thought.

**The geographical unit.** The India of this book is almost exclusively the geographical unit called by that name on the ordinary maps, bounded on the north, north-west, and north-east by mountain ranges, and elsewhere by the sea. The extensive Burmese territories, although now governed as part of the Indian empire, cannot be described as being part of India. Burma has a separate history, rarely touching on that of India prior to the nineteenth century. Similarly, Ceylon, although geologically a fragment detached from the peninsula in relatively recent times, always has had a distinct political existence, requiring separate historical treatment. The island is not now included in the Indian empire, and its affairs will not be discussed in this work, except incidentally. Certain portions of Balōchistan now administered or controlled by the Indian Government lie beyond the limits of the geographical unit called India. Aden and sundry other outlying dependencies of the Indian empire obviously are not parts of India, and the happenings in those places rarely demand notice.

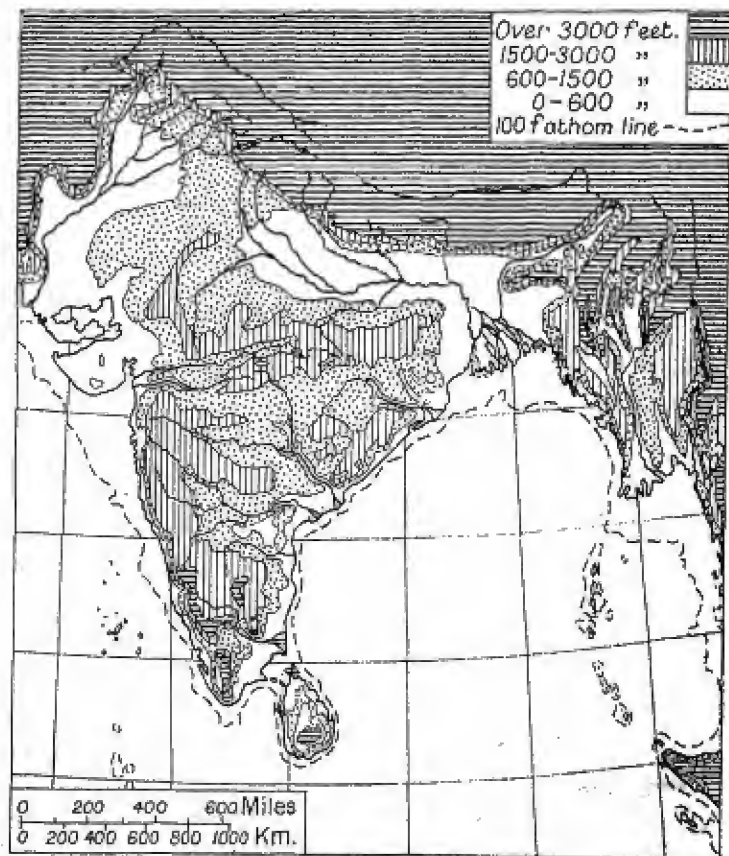
**Vast extent of area.** Formal, technical descriptions of the geographical and physical features of India may be found in many easily accessible books, and need not be reproduced here. But certain geographical facts with a direct bearing on the history require brief comment, because, as Richard Hakluyt truly observed long ago, 'Geographie and Chronologie are the Sunne and the Moone, the right eye and the left eye of all history.' The large extent of the area of India, which may be correctly designated as a sub-continent, is a material geographical fact. The history of a region so vast, bounded by a coast-line of about 3,400 miles, more or less, and a mountain barrier on the north some 1,600 miles in length, and inhabited by a population numbering nearly 300 millions, necessarily must be long and intricate. The detailed treatment suitable to the story of a small country cannot be applied in a general history of India. The author of such a book must be content to sketch his picture in outlines boldly drawn, and to leave out multitudes of recorded particulars.

**Continental and peninsular regions.** Another geographical fact, namely, that India comprises both a large continental, sub-tropical area, and an approximately equal peninsular, tropical area, has had immense influence upon the history.

**Three territorial compartments.** Geographical conditions



divided Indian history, until the nineteenth century, into three well-marked territorial compartments, not to mention minor distinct areas, such as the Konkan, the Himalayan region, and others. The three are : (1) the northern plains forming the basins of the



INDIA PHYSICAL.

Indus and Ganges ; (2) the Deccan plateau lying to the south of the Narbadā, and to the north of the Krishnā and Tungabhadra rivers ; and (3) the far south, beyond those rivers, comprising the group of Tamil states. Ordinarily, each of those three geographical compartments has had a distinct, highly complex story of

its own. The points of contact between the three histories are not very numerous.

**Dominance of the north.** The northern plains, the Āryāvarta of the old books, and the Hindostan of more recent times, always have been the seat of the principal empires and the scene of the events most interesting to the outer world. The wide waterways of the great snow-fed rivers and the fertile level plains are natural advantages which have inevitably attracted a teeming population from time immemorial. The open nature of the country, easily accessible to martial invaders from the north-west, has given frequent occasion for the formation of powerful kingdoms ruled by vigorous foreigners. The peninsular, tropical section of India, isolated from the rest of the world by its position, and in contact with other countries only by sea-borne commerce, has pursued its own course, little noticed by and caring little for foreigners. The historian of India is bound by the nature of things to direct his attention primarily to the north, and is able to give only a secondary place to the story of the Deccan plateau and the far south.

No southern power ever could attempt to master the north, but the more ambitious rulers of Āryāvarta or Hindostan often have extended their sway far beyond the dividing line of the Narbadā. When Dupleix in the eighteenth century dreamed of a Franco-Indian empire with its base in the peninsula he was bound to fail. The success of the English was dependent on their acquisition of rich Bengal and their command of the Gangetic waterway. In a later stage of the British advance the conquest of the Panjāb was conditioned by the control of the Indus navigation, previously secured by the rather unscrupulous proceedings of Lords Auckland and Ellenborough. The rivers of the peninsula do not offer similar facilities for penetration of the interior.

**Changes in rivers.** The foregoing general observations indicate broadly the ways in which the geographical position and configuration of India have affected the course of her history. But the subject will bear a little more elaboration and the discussion of certain less conspicuous illustrations of the bearing of geography upon history. Let us consider for a moment the changes in the great rivers of India, which, when seen in full flood, suggest thoughts of the ocean rather than of inland streams. Unless one has battled in an open ferry-boat with one of those mighty masses of surging water in the height of the rains, it is difficult to realize their demoniac power. They cut and carve the soft alluvial plains at their will, recking of nothing. (Old beds of the Sutlaj can be traced across a space eighty-five miles wide.) The Indus, the Ganges, the Kosi, the Brahmaputra, and scores of other rivers behave, each according to its ability, in the same way, despising all barriers, natural or artificial. Who can tell where the Indus flowed in the days of Alexander the Great? Yet books, professedly learned, are not afraid to trace his course minutely through the Panjāb and Sind by the help of some modern map, and to offer pretended identifications of sites upon the banks of rivers which certainly

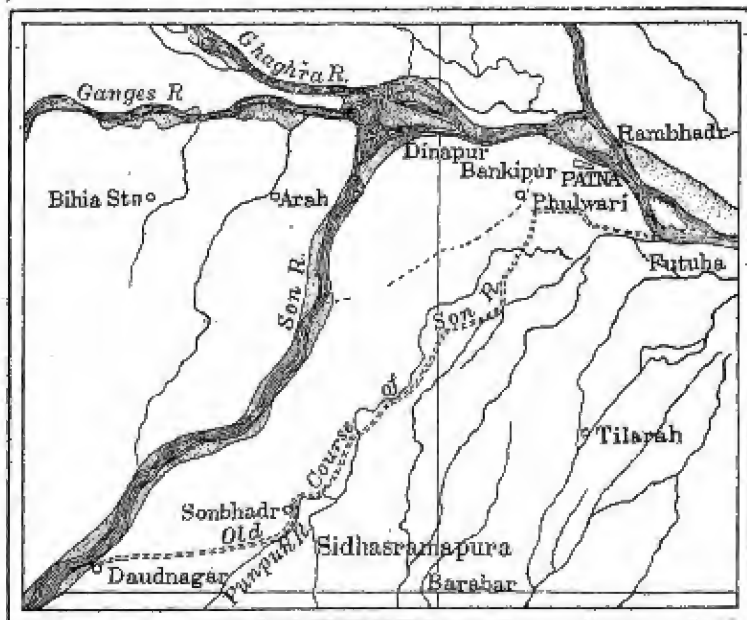
were somewhere else twenty-two centuries ago. We know that they must have been somewhere else, but where they were no man can tell. So with the Vedic rivers, several of which bear the ancient names. The rivers of the Rishis were not the rivers of to-day. The descriptions prove that in the old, old days their character often differed completely from what it now is, and experience teaches that their courses must have been widely divergent. Commentators in their arm-chairs with the latest edition of the Indian *Atlas* opened out before them are not always willing to be bothered with such inconvenient facts. Ever since the early Muhammadan invasions the changes in the rivers have been enormous, and the contemporary histories of the foreign conquerors cannot be understood unless the reality and extent of those changes be borne constantly in mind. One huge river-system, based on the extinct Hakra or Wahindah river, which once flowed down from the mountains through Bahawalpur, has wholly disappeared, the final stages having been deferred until the eighteenth century. Scores of mounds, silent witnesses to the existence of numberless forgotten and often nameless towns, bear testimony to the desolation wrought when the waters of life desert their channels. A large and fascinating volume might be devoted to the study and description of the freaks of Indian rivers.

**Position of cities.** In connexion with that topic another point may be mentioned. The founders of the more important old cities almost invariably built, if possible, on the bank of a river, and not only that, but between two rivers in the triangle above the confluence. Dozens of examples might be cited, but one must suffice. The ancient imperial capital, Pataliputra, represented by the modern Patna, occupied such a secure position between the guarding waters of the Sōn and the Ganges. The existing city, twelve miles or so below the confluence, has lost the strategical advantages of its predecessor. Historians who forget the position of Pataliputra in relation to the rivers go hopelessly wrong in their comments on the texts of the ancient Indian and foreign authors.

**Changes of the land.** Changes in the coast-line and the level of the land have greatly modified the course of history, and must be remembered by the historian who desires to avoid ludicrous blunders. The story of the voyage of Nearchos, for instance, cannot be properly appreciated by any student who fails to compare the descriptions recorded by the Greeks with the surveys of modern geographers. When the changes in the coast-line are understood, statements of the old authors which looked erroneous at first sight are found to be correct. The utter destruction of the once wealthy commercial cities of Korkai and Kāyal on the Tinnevely coast, now miles from the sea and buried under sand dunes, ceases to be a mystery when we know, as we do, that the coast level has risen. In other localities, some not very distant from the places named, the converse has happened, and the sea has advanced, or, in other words, the land has sunk. The careful investigator of ancient history needs to be continually on his guard

against the insidious deceptions of the modern map. Many learned professors, German and others, have tumbled headlong into the pit. The subject being a hobby of mine I must not ride the steed too far.

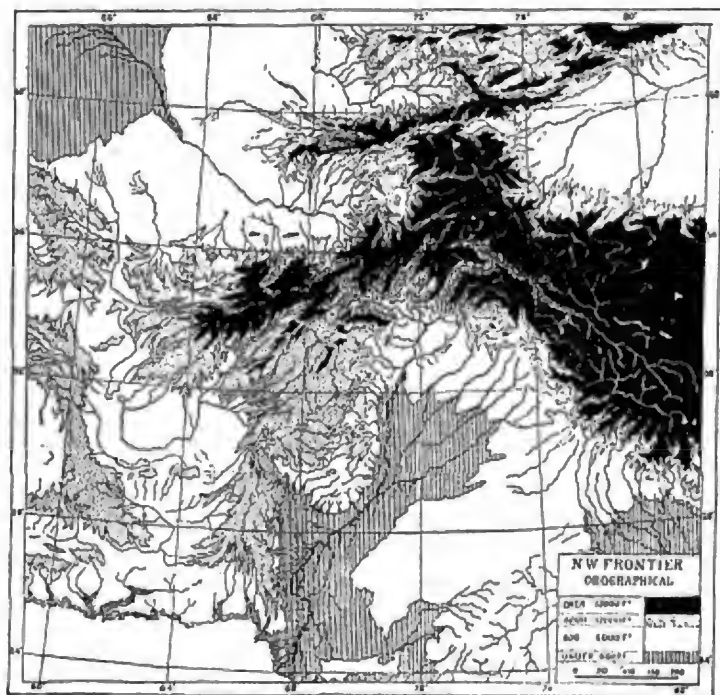
**The scenes of Indian history.** Emphasis has been laid on the fact that most of the notable events of Indian history occurred in one or other of the three great regions separated from each other by natural barriers. Hindostan, the Deccan, and, the far



CHANGED COURSE OF SŌN.

south continued to be thus kept apart until the rapid progress of scientific discovery during the nineteenth century overthrew the boundaries set by nature. The mighty Indus and Ganges are now spanned by railway bridges as securely as a petty water-course is crossed by a six-foot culvert. The No Man's Land of Gondwāna—the wild country along the banks of the Narbadā and among the neighbouring hills—no longer hides any secrets. Roads and railways climb the steepest passes of the Western Ghāts, which more than once tried the nerves of our soldiers in the old wars. The magnificent natural haven of Bombay always was as good as it is now, but it was of no use to anybody as long as it was cut off from the interior of India by creeks, swamps, and

mountains. The changes in modern conditions, which it would be tedious to enumerate, have made Bombay the premier city of India. Royal command may decree that the official head-quarters of the Government of India should shift from Calcutta to Delhi, but no proclamations can make the inland city of the Moguls the real capital of India, so long as the Indian empire is ruled by the masters of the sea. The claim to the first place may be disputed



NORTH-WESTERN PHYSICAL FEATURES.

between Calcutta and Bombay. No rival can share in the competition.

**Fortresses.** The progress of modern science has not only destroyed the political and strategical value of the natural barriers offered by mountains, rivers, and forests. It has also rendered useless the ancient fortresses, which used to be considered impregnable, and were more often won by bribery than by assault. Asirgarh in Khândesh, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was reckoned to be one of the wonders of the world, so

that it was 'impossible to conceive a stronger fortress', defied the arms of Akbar, yielding only to his gold. Now it stands desolate, without a single soldier to guard it. When Lord Dufferin decided to pay Sindia the compliment of restoring Gwāllor Fort to his keeping, the transfer could be effected without the slightest danger to the safety of the Empire. The numberless strongholds on the tops of the hills of the Deccan before which Aurangzēb wasted so



NORTH-WESTERN PASSES AND COUNTRIES.

many years are now open to any sightseer. The strategical points which dominated the military action of the Hindu and Muhāmmadan sovereigns are for the most part of no account in these days. The sieges of fortresses which occupy so large a space in the earlier history will never occur again. Modern generals think much more of a railway junction than of the most inaccessible castle.

**The northern record.** One reason why the historian must devote most of his space to the narrative of events occurring in northern India has been mentioned. Another is that the northern

record is far less imperfect than that of the peninsula. Very little is known definitely concerning the southern kingdoms before A. D. 600, whereas the history of Hindostan may be carried back twelve centuries earlier. The extreme deficiency of really ancient records concerning the peninsula leaves an immense gap in the history of India which cannot be filled.

**Sea-power.** The arrival of Vasco da Gama's three little ships at Calicut in 1498 revolutionized Indian history by opening up the country to bold adventurers coming by sea. The earlier maritime visitors to the coasts had come solely for purposes of commerce without any thought of occupation or conquest. It is needless here to recall how the Portuguese pointed out to their successors, Dutch, French, and English, the path of conquest, and so made possible the British empire of India. The country now is at the mercy of the power which commands the sea, and could not possibly be held by any power unable to control the sea routes. The strategical importance of the north-western passes has declined as that of Bombay and Karāchi has risen.

**Endless diversity.** The endless diversity in the Indian sub-continent is apparent and has been the subject of many trite remarks. From the physical point of view we find every extreme of altitude, temperature, rainfall, and all the elements of climate. The variety of the flora and fauna, largely dependent upon climatic conditions, is equally obvious. From the human point of view India has been often described as an ethnological museum, in which numberless races of mankind may be studied, ranging from savages of low degree to polished philosophers. That variety of races, languages, manners and customs is largely the cause of the innumerable political subdivisions which characterize Indian history before the unification effected by the British supremacy. (Megasthenes in the fourth century B.C. heard of 118 kingdoms, and the actual number may well have been more.) Even now the Native or Protected States, small and great, may be reckoned as about 700. In all ages the crowd of principalities and powers has been almost past counting. From time to time a strong paramount power has arisen and succeeded for a few years in introducing a certain amount of political unity, but such occasions were rare. When no such power existed, the states, hundreds in number, might be likened to a swarm of free, mutually repellent molecules in a state of incessant movement, now flying apart, and again coalescing.

**Unity in diversity.** How then, in the face of such bewildering diversity, can a history of India be written and compressed into a single volume of moderate bulk? The difficulties arising from the manifold diversities summarily indicated above are real, and present serious obstacles both to the writer and to the reader of Indian history. A chronicle of all the kingdoms for thousands of years is manifestly impracticable. (The answer to the query is found in the fact that India offers unity in diversity. The underlying unity being less obvious than the superficial diversity, its

nature and limitations merit exposition. The mere fact that the name India conveniently designates a sub-continental area does not help to unify history any more than the existence of the name Asia could make a history of that continent feasible. The unity sought must be of a nature more fundamental than that implied in the currency of a geographical term.

**Political union.** Political union attained by the subjection of all India to one monarch or paramount authority would, of course, be sufficient to make smooth the path of the historian. Such political union never was enjoyed by all India until the full establishment of the British sovereignty, which may be dated in one sense so recently as 1877, when Queen Victoria became Empress of India; in another sense from 1858, when Her Majesty assumed the direct government of British India; and in a third sense from 1818, when the Marquess of Hastings shattered the Marāthā power, and openly proclaimed the fact that the East India Company had become the paramount authority throughout the whole country. Very few rulers, Hindu or Muhammadan, attained sovereignty even as extensive as that claimed by the Marquess of Hastings. The Mauryas, who after the defeat of Seleukos Nikator held the country now called Afghanistan as far as the Hindu Kush, exercised authority more or less direct over all India Proper down to the northern parts of Mysore. But even Asoka did not attempt to bring the Tamil kingdoms under his dōminion. The empires of the Kushāns and Guptas were confined to the north. In the fourteenth century Muhammad bin Tughlak for a few years exercised imperfect sovereign powers over very nearly the whole of India. Akbar and his historians never mention the Tamil states, and so far as appears never heard of the powerful Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, which broke up in 1565. But the Great Mogul cherished a passionate desire to subdue the kingdoms of the Deccan plateau. His success, however, was incomplete, and did not extend beyond Ahmadnagar in the latitude of Bombay. His descendants pursued his policy, and at the close of the eighteenth century Aurangzēb's officers levied tribute two or three times from Tanjore and Trichinopoly. Thus Aurangzēb might be regarded as being in a very loose sense the suzerain of almost all India. The Kābul territory continued to be part of the empire until 1739. The periods of partial political unification thus summarily indicated afford welcome footholds to the historian, and are far easier to deal with than the much longer intervals when no power with any serious claim to paramountcy existed.

The political unity of all India, although never attained perfectly in fact, always was the ideal of the people throughout the centuries. The conception of the universal sovereign as the Chakravartin Rājā runs through Sanskrit literature and is emphasized in scores of inscriptions. The story of the gathering of the nations to the battle of Kurukshetra, as told in the *Mahābhārata*, implies the belief that all the Indian peoples, including those of the extreme south, were united by real bonds and concerned in



interests common to all. European writers, as a rule, have been more conscious of the diversity than of the unity of India. Joseph Cunningham, an author of unusually independent spirit, is an exception. When describing the Sikh fears of British aggression in 1845, he recorded the acute and true observation that 'Hindustan, moreover, from Caubul to the valley of Assam, and the island of Ceylon, is regarded as one country, and dominion in it is associated in the minds of the people with the predominance of one monarch or one race'.<sup>1</sup> India therefore possesses, and always has possessed for considerably more than two thousand years, ideal political unity, in spite of the fact that actual complete union under one sovereign, universally acknowledged by all other princes and potentates, dates only from 1877. The immemorial persistence of that ideal goes a long way to explain the acquiescence of India in British rule, and was at the bottom of the passionate outburst of loyal devotion to their King-Emperor so touchingly expressed in many ways by princes and people in 1911.

**Fundamental unity of Hinduism.** The most essentially fundamental Indian unity rests upon the fact that the diverse peoples of India have developed a peculiar type of culture or civilization utterly different from any other type in the world. That civilization may be summed up in the term Hinduism. India primarily is a Hindu country, the land of the Brahmans, who have succeeded by means of peaceful penetration, not by the sword, in carrying their ideas into every corner of India. Caste, the characteristic Brahman institution, utterly unknown in Burma, Tibet, and other border lands, dominates the whole of Hindu India, and exercises no small influence over the powerful Muhammadan minority. Nearly all Hindus reverence Brahmans,<sup>2</sup> and all may be said to venerate the cow. Few deny the authority of the Vedas and the other ancient scriptures. Sanskrit everywhere is the sacred language. The great gods, Vishnu and Siva, are recognized and more or less worshipped in all parts of India. The pious pilgrim, when going the round of the holy places, is equally at home among the snows of Badrināth or on the burning sands of Rāma's Bridge. The seven sacred cities include places in the far south as well as in Hindostan. Similarly, the cult of rivers is common to all Hindus, and all alike share in the affection felt for the tales of the *Mahabharata* and *Rāmāyana*.)

India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners, and sect.

**Limitations of unity.** But the limitations are many. Caste, which, looked at broadly, unites all Hindus by differentiating them from the rest of mankind, disintegrates them by breaking

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Sikhs*<sup>2</sup> (1853), p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> The Lingāyats of the Kanarese country are the principal exception, but others exist.

them up into thousands of mutually exclusive and often hostile sections. It renders combined political or social action difficult, and in many cases impossible; while it shuts off all Hindus in large measure from sympathy with the numerous non-Hindu population. The Muhammadans, by far the largest part of that population, are not concerned with most of the reasons which make all Hindus one in a sense. An Indian Muslim may be, and often is, far more in sympathy with an Arab or Persian fellow-believer than he is with his Hindu neighbour. The smaller communities, Christians, Jews, Parsees, and others, are still more distant from the Hindu point of view.

Nevertheless, when all allowances are made for the limitations, the fundamental unity of Hindu culture alone makes a general history of India feasible.

**Dravidian culture.** The Brahmanical ideas and institutions, although universally diffused in every province, have not been wholly victorious. Prehistoric forms of worship and many utterly un-Aryan social practices survive, especially in the peninsula among the peoples speaking Dravidian languages. We see there the strange spectacle of an exaggerated regard for caste coexisting with all sorts of weird notions and customs alien to Brahman tradition. While it is not improbable that the Dravidian civilization may be as old as or even older than the Indo-Aryan Brahmanical culture of the north, which was long regarded in the south as an unwelcome intruder to be resisted strenuously, the materials available for the study of early Dravidian institutions are too scanty and imperfectly explored to permit of history being based upon them. The historian's attention necessarily must be directed chiefly to the Indo-Aryan institutions of the north, which are much more fully recorded than those of the south. An enthusiastic southern scholar has expressed the opinion that 'the scientific historian of India . . . ought to begin his study with the basin of the Krishna, of the Cauvery, of the Vaigai [in Madura and the Pāndya country] rather than with the Gangetic plain, as it has been now long, too long, the fashion'. That advice, however sound it may be in principle, cannot be followed in practice at present; and, so far as I can see, it is not likely that even in a distant future it will be practicable to begin writing Indian history in the manner suggested.

**Lack of political evolution.** The interest attaching to the gradual evolution of political institutions is lacking in Indian history. The early tribal constitutions of a republican, or at any rate, oligarchical character, which are known to have existed among the Mālavas, Kshudrakas, and other nations in the time of Alexander the Great, as well as among the Licchhavis and Yaudhēyas at much later dates, all perished without leaving a trace. Autocracy is substantially the only form of government with which the historian of India is concerned. Despotism does not admit of development. Individual monarchs vary infinitely in ability and character, but the nature of a despotic government

remains much the same at all times and in all places, whether the ruler be a saint or a tyrant.

**Extinction of tribal constitutions.** The reason for the extinction of the tribal constitutions appears to be that they were a Mongolian institution, the term Mongolian being used to mean tribes racially allied to the Tibetans, Gürkhas, and other Himalayan nations. The Mongolian element in the population of northern India before and after the Christian era was, I believe, much larger than is usually admitted. When the Mongolian people and ideas were overborne in course of time by the strangers who followed the Indo-Aryan or Brahmanical cult and customs, the tribal constitutions disappeared along with many other non-Aryan institutions. The Brahmanical people always were content with autoeracy.<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'autoeracy' or the equivalent 'despotism' without qualification intentionally, because I do not believe in the theory advocated by several modern Hindu authors that the ancient Indian king was a 'limited' or constitutional monarch. Those authors have been misled by taking too seriously the admonitions of the text-book writers that the ideal king should be endowed with all the virtues and should follow the advice of sage counsellors. In reality every Indian despot who was strong enough did exactly what he pleased. If any limitations on his authority were operative, they took effect only because he was weak. A strong sovereign like Chandragupta Maurya was not to be bound by the cobwebs of texts. Long afterwards, Akbar, notwithstanding his taste for sententious moral aphorisms, was equally self-willed.

**Village and municipal institutions.** Much sentimental rhetoric with little relation to the actual facts has been written about the supposed indestructible constitution of the Indo-Aryan village in the north. The student of highly developed village institutions, involving real local self-government administered on an elaborately organized system, should turn to the south and examine the constitution of the villages in the Chola kingdom as recorded for the period from the tenth to the twelfth centuries of the Christian era, and no doubt of extremely ancient origin.<sup>2</sup> Those institutions, like the tribal constitutions of the north, perished long ago, being killed by rulers who had no respect for the old indigenous modes of administration. The development of municipal institutions, which furnishes material for so many interesting chapters in European history, is a blank page in the history of India.

**History of Indian thought.** The defects in the subject-matter of Indian history pointed out in the foregoing observa-

<sup>1</sup> On this obscure subject see the author's papers entitled 'Tibetan Affinities of the Lichchhavis' (*Ind. Ant.*, vol. xxxii (1908), pp. 288 foll.; and 'Tibetan Illustration of the Yaudhēya Tribal Organization' (*ibid.*, vol. xxxv (1906)), p. 290; and K. P. Jayaswal, 'Republics in the Mahābhārata' (*J. O. & B. Res. Soc.*, vol. i, pp. 173-8). A well-executed treatise on the subject would be welcome.

<sup>2</sup> *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914), pp. 459, 464, with references.

tions undoubtedly tend to make the political history of the country rather dry reading. The more attractive story of the development of Indian thought as expressed in religion and philosophy, literature, art, and science cannot be written intelligibly unless it is built on the solid foundation of dynastic history, which alone can furnish the indispensable chronological basis. Readers who may be disposed to turn away with weariness from the endless procession of kingdoms and despots may console themselves by the reflection that a working acquaintance with the political history of India is absolutely essential as a preliminary for the satisfactory treatment of the story of the development of her ideas.

I have tried to give in this work, so far as unavoidable limitations permit, an outline of the evolution of Indian thought in various fields. Students who desire further information must consult special treatises when such exist.

**Divisions of the history.** The main divisions of a book on Indian history hardly admit of variation. I have drawn the line between the Ancient Period and the Hindu Period at the beginning of the Maurya dynasty as a matter of convenience. In the Hindu Period the death of Harsha in A. D. 647 marks a suitable place for beginning a fresh section. The subdivisions of the Muhammadan Period, occupying Books IV, V, VI, and including the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar, are almost equally self-evident. Three books, VII, VIII, and IX, are devoted to the British Period. The dividing line between Books VII and VIII should be drawn in my opinion at the year 1818, and not at the close of the administration of the Marquess of Hastings. The significance of the events of 1858, when the series of Viceroys begins, cannot be mistaken.

#### AUTHORITIES

The subject-matter of this section has been treated previously by the author in several publications, namely, in *E. H. I.* (1914), Introduction; *Oxford Student's History of India*, latest ed., chap. i; and the *Oxford Survey of the British Empire* (1914), chap. vii. A good formal geographical book is the *Geography of India* by G. PARRERSON, (*Christian Literature Soc. for India*, London, 1906). See also *I. G.* (*Indian Empire*), 1907, vol. i, and the *Atlas* of the same work (1909). The little book entitled *The Fundamental Unity of India* (Longmans, 1914), by Prof. RADHAKUMUD MOOKERJEE is well written, learned, and accurate, notwithstanding its avowed political purpose. The influence of sea-power upon Indian history is expounded by Sir A. LYALL in *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (Murray, 1910).

## SECTION 2

The Sources, or the Original Authorities.

**Undated history before 650 B.C.** A body of history strictly so-called must be built upon a skeleton of chronology, that is to say, on a series of dates more or less precise. In India, as in Greece, such a series begins about the middle or close of the seventh century before Christ.<sup>1</sup> Nothing approaching exact chronology being attainable for earlier times, the account which the historian can offer of those times necessarily is wanting in definiteness and precision. It is often difficult to determine even the sequence or successive order of events. Nevertheless, no historian of India and the Indians can escape from the obligation of offering some sort of picture of the life of undated ancient India, in its political, social, religious, literary, and artistic aspects, previous to the dawn of exact history. The early literature, composed chiefly in the Sanskrit, Pāli, and Tamil languages, supplies abundant material, much of which is accessible in one or other European tongue. The thorough exploration of the gigantic mass of literature, especially that of the southern books, is a task so vast that it cannot ever be completed. Large fields of study have been hardly investigated at all. But a great deal of good work has been accomplished, and the labours of innumerable scholars, European, American, and Indian have won results sufficiently certain to warrant the drawing of an outline sketch of the beginnings of Indian life and history. Although the lines of the sketch are somewhat wanting in clearness, especially with reference to the Vedic age and the early Dravidian civilization, we moderns can form a tolerably distinct mental picture of several stages of Indian history prior to the earliest date ascertained with even approximate accuracy. Such an outline sketch or picture will be presented in the second chapter of Book I.

**Chronological puzzles.** Definite chronological history begins about 650 B.C. for Northern India. No positive historical statement can be made concerning the peninsula until a date much later. Even in the north all approximate dates before the invasion of Alexander in 326 B.C. are obtained only by reasoning back from the known to the unknown. The earliest absolutely certain precise date is that just named, 326 B.C.

The student may be glad to have in this place a brief exposition of the special difficulties which lie in the way of ascertaining precise

<sup>1</sup> 'The first exact date we have bearing on the history of Greece' is April 8, 648 B.C., when an eclipse of the sun occurred which was witnessed and noted by the poet Archilochus (Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1904, p. 119). But the earliest really historical date known with any approach to accuracy seems to be that of Cylon's conspiracy at Athens, which is placed about 632 B.C. The archonship of Solon is put in either 594-593 or 592-591 B.C. (ibid., pp. 178, 182).

dates for the events of early Hindu history. Numerous dates are recorded in one fashion or another, but the various authorities are often contradictory, and usually open to more than one interpretation. Dates expressed only in regnal years, such as 'in the 8th year after the coronation of King A. B.', are not of much use unless we can find out by other means the time when King A. B. lived. Very often the year is given as simply 'the year 215', or the like, without mention of the era used, which to the writer needed no specification. In the same way when modern Europeans speak of the 'year 1914', everybody understands that to mean 'after Christ', A. D. or A. C. In other cases an era may be named, but it is not certain from what date the era is to be reckoned. For example, many dates recorded in the Gupta era were known long before historians could make confident use of them. When Fleet was able to prove that Gupta Era, year 1 = A. D. 319-20, the whole Gupta dynasty dropped at once into its proper historical setting. The fixation of that one date brought order into several centuries of early Indian history. Dated inscriptions of the Indo-Scythian or Kushān kings are even more abundant, but up to the present time we do not know to which era a record of theirs dated, say, 'in the year 98' should be referred; and in consequence an important section of Indian history continues to be the sport of conjecture, so that it is impossible to write with assurance a narrative of the events connected with one of the most interesting dynasties. That chronological uncertainty spoils the history of religion, art, and literature, as well as the purely political chronicle, for the first two centuries of the Christian era.

More than thirty different eras have been used in Indian annals from time to time.<sup>1</sup> Difficulties of various kinds, astronomical and other, are involved in the attempt to determine the dates on which the various eras begin. Although those difficulties have been surmounted to a large extent many obscurities remain.

**Synchronisms; old and new styles.** Several puzzles have been solved by the use of 'synchronisms', that is to say, by the use of stray bits of information showing that King A. of unknown date was contemporary with King B. of known date. The standard example is that of Chandragupta Maurya, the contemporary of Alexander the Great for some years. The approximate date of King Meghavarna of Ceylon in the fourth century A. C. is similarly indicated by the 'synchronism' with the Indian King Samudragupta; many other cases might be cited.

The testimony of foreign authors is specially useful in this connexion, because they often give dates the meaning of which is known with certainty. Indian historians obtain much help in that way from the chronicles of Greece, China, and Ceylon, all of which have well-known systems of chronology. The subject might be further illustrated at great length, but what has been said may suffice to give the student a notion of the difficulties of

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's *Book of Indian Eras* (1883) discusses 27, and many more are mentioned in records.

Hindu chronology, and some of the ways in which many of them have been cleared away.

In the Muhammadan period chronological puzzles are mostly due to the innumerable contradictions of the authorities, but trouble is often experienced in converting Muslim Hijrī dates exactly into the terms of the Christian era. Akbar's fanciful *Ilāhī*, or Divine Era, and Tippoo Sultan's still more whimsical chronology present special conundrums. In the British period nearly all dates are ascertained with ease and certainty, subject to occasional conflict of evidence or confusion between the old and new styles, which differ by ten days in the seventeenth and by eleven days in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

**Six classes of sources of Hindu history.** The nature of the sources of or original authorities for Hindu history from 650 B. C. will now be considered briefly. The native or indigenous sources may be classified under five heads, namely: (1) inscriptions, or epigraphic evidence; (2) coins, or numismatic evidence; (3) monuments, buildings, and works of art, or archaeological evidence; (4) tradition, as recorded in literature; and (5) ancient historical writings, sometimes contemporary with the events narrated. The sixth source, foreign testimony, is mostly supplied either by the works of travellers of various nations, or by regular historians, especially the Cingalese, Greek, and Chinese. The value of each class of evidence will now be explained.

**Inscriptions.** Inscriptions have been given the first place in the list because they are, on the whole, the most important and trustworthy source of our knowledge. Unfortunately, they do not at present go further back than the third century B. C. with certainty, although it is not unlikely that records considerably earlier may be discovered, and it is possible that a very few known documents may go back beyond the reign of Asoka. Indian inscriptions, which usually are incised on either stone or metal, may be either official documents set forth by kings or other authorities, or records made by private persons for various purposes. Most of the inscriptions on stone either commemorate particular events or record the dedication of buildings or images. The commemorative documents range from the simple signature of a pilgrim to long and elaborate Sanskrit poems detailing the achievements of victorious kings. Such poems are called *prasasti*. The inscriptions on metal are for the most part grants of land inscribed on plates of

<sup>1</sup> Pope Gregory XIII undertook to reform the Roman calendar by correcting the error which had gradually grown to inconvenient dimensions in the course of centuries. Accordingly he decreed in 1582 that October 5 by the old calendar of that year should be called October 15. The reform was adopted either immediately or soon by Portugal, France, and several other nations; but in Great Britain and Ireland the change was not effected until 1752, Parliament having passed an Act enacting that September 3 of that year should be deemed to be September 14, new style; eleven days being dropped out of the reckoning. Russia still adhered to the old style until 1917 and was then nearly 13 days in error.



copper. They are sometimes extremely long, especially in the south, and usually include information about the reigning king and his ancestors. Exact knowledge of the dates of events in early Hindu history, so far as it has been attained, rests chiefly on the testimony of inscriptions.

Records of an exceptional kind occur occasionally. The most remarkable of such documents are the edicts of Asoka, which in the main are sermons on *dharma*, the Law of Piety or Duty. At Ajmēr in Rājputāna and at Dhār in Central India fragments of plays have been found inscribed on stone tablets. Part of a treatise on architecture is incised on one of the towers at Chitōr, and a score of music for the *vīṇā*, or Indian lute, has been found in the Pudukottai State, Madras. A few of the metal inscriptions are dedications, and one very ancient document on copper, the Sohgaura plate from the Gorakhpur District, is concerned with Government storehouses.

The inscriptions which have been catalogued and published more or less fully aggregate many thousands. The numbers in the peninsula especially are enormous.

**Coins.** The legends on coins really are a class of inscriptions on metal, but it is more convenient to treat them separately. The science of numismatics, or the study of ancient coins, requires special expert knowledge. Coins, including those without any legends, can be made to yield much information concerning the condition of the country in the distant past. The dates frequently recorded on them afford invaluable evidence for fixing chronology. Even when the outline of the history is well known from books, as is the case for most of the Muhammadan period, the numismatic testimony helps greatly in settling doubtful dates, and in illustrating details of many kinds. Our scanty knowledge of the Bactrian, Indo-Greek, and Indo-Parthian dynasties rests chiefly on inferences drawn from the study of coins.

**Archaeological evidence.** The archaeological evidence, regarded as distinct from that of inscriptions and coins, is obtained by the systematic skilled examination of buildings, monuments, and works of art. Careful registration of the stratification of the ruins on ancient sites, that is to say, of the exact order in which the remains of one period follow those of another, often gives valuable proof of date. The excavations on the site of Taxila, for instance, have done much to clear up the puzzle of the Kushān or Indo-Scythian chronology already mentioned. The scientific description of buildings erected for religious or civil purposes, such as temples, *stūpas*, palaces, and private houses, throws welcome light on the conditions prevailing in ancient times. The study of works of art, including images, frescoes, and other objects, enables us to draw in outline the history of Indian art, and often affords a most illuminating commentary on the statements in books. The history of Indian religions cannot be properly understood by students who confine their attention to literary evidence. The testimony of the monuments and works of art is equally important,



and, in fact, those remains tell much which is not to be learned from books. Intelligent appreciation of the material works wrought by the ancients is necessary for the formation of a true mental picture of the past. Such observations apply equally to the Hindu and the Muhammadan periods.

**Tradition almost the sole source of undated history.** The knowledge, necessarily extremely imperfect, which we possess concerning ancient India between 650 and 326 B.C. is almost wholly derived from tradition as recorded in literature of various kinds, chiefly composed in the Sanskrit, Pāli, and Tamil languages. Most of the early literature is of a religious kind, and the strictly historical facts have to be collected laboriously, bit by bit, from works which were not intended to serve as histories. Some valuable scraps of historical tradition have been picked out of the writings of grammarians; and several plays, based on historical facts, yield important testimony. Tradition continues to be a rich source of historical information long after 326 B.C.

**Absence of Hindu historical literature explained.** The trite observation that Indian literature, prior to the Muhammadan period, does not include formal histories, although true in a sense, does not present the whole truth. Most of the Sanskrit books were composed by Brahmans, who certainly had not a taste for writing histories, their interest being engaged in other pursuits. But the Rājās were eager to preserve annals of their own doings, and took much pains to secure ample and permanent record of their achievements. They are not to blame for the melancholy fact that their efforts have had little success. The records laboriously prepared and regularly maintained have perished almost completely in consequence of the climate, including insect pests in that term, and of the innumerable political revolutions from which India has suffered. Every court in the old Hindu kingdoms maintained official bards and chroniclers whose duty it was to record and keep up the annals of the state. Some portion of such chronicles has been preserved and published by Colonel Tod, the author of the famous book, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, first published in 1829, but that work stands almost alone. The great mass of the Rājās' annals has perished beyond recall.<sup>1</sup> Some fragments of the early chronicles clearly are preserved in the royal genealogies and connected historical observations recorded in the more ancient Purāṇas; and numerous extracts from local records are given in the prefaces to many inscriptions. Thus it appears that the Hindus were not indifferent to history, although the Brahmans, the principal literary class, cared little for historical composition as a form of literature, except in the form of *prasastis*, some of which are poems of considerable literary merit. Such Sanskrit histories as exist usually were produced in the border countries, the best being the metrical chronicle of Kashmīr, called the *Raja-tarangīnī*, composed in the twelfth century. Even that

<sup>1</sup> The survey of Rājputāna literature now in progress will disclose many more historical works.

work does not attain exactly to the European ideal of a formal history. Several Brahman authors, notably Bāna in the seventh century, wrote interesting works, half history and half romance, which contain a good deal of authentic historical matter. Our exceptionally full knowledge of the story of Harsha vardhana, King of Thānēsar and Kanauj, is derived largely from the work of Bāna entitled 'The Deeds of Harsha'.

Historical or semi-historical compositions are numerous in the languages of the south. The Mackenzie collection of manuscripts catalogued by H. H. Wilson contains a large number of texts which may be regarded as histories in some degree.

**Foreign evidence.** The indigenous or native sources enumerated above, which must necessarily be the basis of early Hindu history, are supplemented to a most important extent by the writings of foreigners. Hearsay notes recorded by the Greek authors Herodotus and Ktesias in the fifth century B. C. record some scraps of information, but Europe was almost ignorant of India until the veil was lifted by the operations of Alexander (326 to 323 B. C.) and the reports of his officers. Those reports, lost as a whole, survive in considerable extracts quoted in the writings of later authors, Greek and Roman. The expedition of Alexander the Great is not mentioned distinctly by any Hindu author, and the references to the subject by Muhammadan authors are of little value. Megasthenes, the ambassador of Seleukos Nikator to Chandragupta Maurya in the closing years of the fourth century, wrote a highly valuable account of India, much of which has been preserved in fragments.

Formal Chinese histories from about 120 B. C. have something to tell us, but by far the most important and interesting of all the foreign witnesses are the numerous Chinese pilgrims who visited the Holy Land of Buddhism, between A. D. 400 and 700. Fa-hien, the earliest of them (A. D. 399-414), gives life to the bald chronicle of Chandragupta Vikramāditya, as constructed from inscriptions and coins. The learned Hiuen Tsang, or Yuan Chwang, in the seventh century, does the same for Harsha vardhana, and also records innumerable matters of interest concerning every part of India. I-tsing and more than sixty other pilgrims have left valuable notes of their travels. A book on the early history of Hindu India would be a very meagre and dry record but for the narratives of the pilgrims, which are full of vivid detail.

**Alberūnī.** Alberūnī, justly entitled the Master, a profoundly learned mathematician and astronomer, who entered India in the train of Mahmūd of Ghazni early in the eleventh century, applied his powerful intellect to the thorough study of the whole life of the Indians. He mastered the difficult Sanskrit language, and produced a truly scientific treatise, entitled 'An Enquiry into India' (*Tahkt-i Hind*), which is a marvel of well-digested erudition. More than five centuries later that great book served as a model to Abu-l-Fazl, whose 'Institutes of Akbar' (*Ain-i Akbari*) plainly betray the unacknowledged debt due to Alberūnī.

**Muhammadian histories.** Muhammadans, unlike the Brahmans, always have shown a liking and aptitude for the writing of professed histories, so that every Muslim dynasty in Asia has found its chronicler. The authors who deal with Indian history wrote, as a rule, in the Persian language. Most of the books are general histories of the Muslim world, in which Indian affairs occupy a comparatively small space, but a few works are confined to Indian subjects. The most celebrated is the excellent and conscientious compilation composed by Firishta (Ferishta) in the reigns of Akbar and Jahāngīr, which forms the basis of Elphinstone's *History of India* and of most modern works on the subject.

A comprehensive general view of the Indian histories in Persian is to be obtained from the translations and summaries in the eight volumes of *The History of India as told by its own Historians* (London, 1867-77) by Sir Henry Elliot and Professor John Dowson. Sir Edward Bayley's incomplete work entitled the *History of Gujarāt* is a supplement to Elliot and Dowson's collection. The English translations of the *Tabakat-i Nāsiri* by Raverty; of the *Ain-i Akbari* by Blochmann and Jarrett; of the *Akbar-nāma* and the *Memoirs of Jahāngīr* by H. Beveridge; of Badāonī's book by Ranking and Lowe; and Prof. Jadunāth Sarkar's learned account of Aurangzēb's reign may be specially mentioned. Many other important books exist. The author of this volume has published a detailed biography of Akbar.

The modern historian of India, therefore, when he comes to the Muhammadan period, finds plenty of history books ready made from which he can draw most of his material. He is not reduced to the necessity of piecing together his story by combining fragments of information laboriously collected from inscriptions, coins, traditions, and passing literary references, as he is compelled to do when treating of the Hindu period. His principal difficulties arise from the contradictions of his authorities, the defects of their mode of composition, and endless minor chronological puzzles.

The epigraphic, numismatic, and monumental testimony is needed only for the completion and correction of details.

The histories written in Persian have many faults when judged by European standards, but, whatever may be the opinion held concerning those defects, it is impossible to write the history of Muhammadan India without using the Persian chronicles as its foundation.

**Foreign evidence for the Muhammadan period.** Foreign testimony is as valuable for the Muhammadan period as it is for the Hindu. From the ninth century onwards Muslim merchants and other travellers throw light upon the history of mediæval India. Some scanty notes recorded by European observers in the fifteenth century have been preserved; and from the sixteenth century numerous works by European travellers present a mass of authentic information supplementary to that recorded by the Muslim historians, who looked at things from a different point of view, and omitted mention of many matters interesting to foreign

observers and modern readers. The reports of the Jesuit missionaries for the Mogul period possess special value, having been written by men highly educated, specially trained, and endowed with powers of keen observation. Large use is made in this volume of those reports which have been too often neglected by modern writers. References to the works of the leading Jesuits and the other foreign travellers will be given in due course.

**Authorities for Indo-European history and British Period.**

State papers and private original documents of many kinds dating as far back as a thousand years ago are fairly abundant in most countries of Europe, and supply a vast quarry of material for the historian. In India they are wholly wanting for both the Hindu and the pre-Mogul Muhammadan periods, except in so far as their place is supplied by inscriptions on stone and metal. A few documents from the reigns of Akbar and his successors survive, but most of what we know about the Moguls is derived from the secondary evidence of historians, as supplemented by the testimony of the foreign travellers, inscriptions, and coins. The case changes with the appearance of Europeans on the scene. The records of the East India Company go back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the Portuguese archives contain numerous documents of the sixteenth century.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, the commencement of the British period, the mass of contemporary papers, public and private, is almost infinite. Considerable portions of the records have been either printed at length or catalogued, and much of the printed material has been worked up by writers on special sections of the history, but an enormous quantity remains unused. In the composition of this work I have not attempted to explore manuscript collections, and have necessarily been obliged to content myself with printed matter only so far as I could manage to read and digest it. No person can read it all, or nearly all. The leading authorities consulted will be noted at the end of each chapter.

**Present state of Indian historical studies.** A brief survey of the present state of Indian historical studies will not be out of place in connexion with the foregoing review of the original authorities.

No general history of the Hindu period was in existence before the publication in 1904 of the first edition of the *Early History of India*. The more condensed treatment of the subject in this volume is based on the third edition of that work, published in 1914, but much new material has been used; and the subject has been treated from a point of view to some extent changed. Many sections of the story need further elucidation, and it is certain that research will add greatly to our knowledge of the period in the near future. Numerous eager inquirers are now at work, who contribute something of value almost every month.

**The Muhammadan period.** The publication in 1841 of Elphinstone's justly famous *History of India* made possible for the

first time systematic study of the Indo-Muhammadian history of Hindostan or Northern India down to the battle of Pānīpat in 1761. Although Elphinstone's book, mainly based on the compilations of Firishta and Khāfi Khān, is of permanent value, it is no disparagement of its high merit to say that in these changed times it is no longer adequate for the needs of either the close student or the general reader. Since Elphinstone wrote many authorities unknown to him have become accessible, archaeological discoveries have been numerous, and corrections of various kinds have become necessary. Moreover, the attitude of readers has been modified. They now ask for something more than is to be found in the austere pages of Elphinstone, who modelled his work on the lines adopted by Muslim chroniclers.

The history of the Sultans of Delhi is in an unsatisfactory state. Much preliminary dry research is required for the accurate ascertainment of the chronology and other facts. The subject is not attractive to a large number of students, and many years may elapse before a thoroughly sound account of the Sultanate of Delhi can be written. A foundation of specialized detailed studies is always needed before a concise narrative can be composed with confidence and accuracy. I have not attempted in this volume to probe deeply among the difficulties connected with the histories of the Sultanate, but venture to hope that I may have succeeded in presenting the subject with a certain amount of freshness, especially in dealing with the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlak. Although considerable advance has been made in the study of the history of the Bahmanī empire and other Muslim kingdoms which became independent of Delhi in the fourteenth century, there is plenty of room for further investigation. The chapters on the subject in this volume are based on the examination of various and sometimes conflicting authorities. The story of the extensive Hindu empire of Vijayanagar (1336-1565) has been largely elucidated by the labours of Mr. Sewell, whose excellent work has been continued and in certain matters corrected by several authors of Indian birth. In these days some of the best historical research is done by Indian scholars, a fact which has resulted in a profound change in the presentation of the history of their land. The public addressed by a modern historian differs essentially in composition and character from that addressed by Elphinstone or Mill.

The true history of the Mogul dynasty is only beginning to be known. The story of Bābur, Humāyūn, and Akbar has been illuminated by the researches of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beveridge, and the study of Akbar's life by the author of this volume includes much novel matter. The interesting reign of Jahāngīr has been badly handled in the current books, Elphinstone's included. The publication of a good version of that emperor's authentic *Memoirs*, and the use of the forgotten third volume of Du Jarric's great work, not to speak of minor advantages, have enabled me to give an abbreviated account of Jahāngīr's reign, which, so far as it

goes, may fairly claim to be nearer to the truth than any narrative yet printed.

The reign of Shāhjahān, prior to the war of succession, still awaits critical study, based on the original authorities; but my treatment of the material available will be found to present a certain amount of novelty. The long and difficult reign of Aurangzēb is being discussed by Professor Jadunāth Sarkār with adequate care and learning. His work, so far as it has been published, is an indispensable authority. The dreary history of the later Moguls has been considerably elucidated in the monographs by Irvine and other works by specialists.

**The British Period.** James Mill's famous work, the *History of British India*, published between 1803 and 1818, brought together for the first time, to use the author's words, 'a history of that part of the British transactions, which have had an immediate relation to India'. Mill's book, notwithstanding its well-known faults, will always be valuable for reference. But it is a hundred years old, and much has happened since it was written. A history of the British period, whether long or short, must now be planned on somewhat different lines, and must include at least the whole of the nineteenth century.

No really satisfactory work on the period exists. The reason perhaps is that the material is too vast to be handled properly. The absence of any first class work on a large scale renders impossible at present the preparation of a condensed history capable of satisfying the ideals of an author or the requirements of skilled critics. The composition of a sound, large work on the subject would be more than sufficient occupation for a long life. A writer who aims only at producing a readable, reasonably accurate, and up-to-date general history of India within the limits of a single volume, must be content to do his best with so much of the over-abundant material as he has leisure to master.

**Changed methods.** It will be apparent from the foregoing summary review of the present condition of Indian historical studies, that the writer of a comparatively short history, while enjoying various advantages denied to his predecessors even a few years ago, is not at present in a position to supply a uniformly authentic and digested narrative in all the sections of his work. In some fields the ground has been thoroughly, or at any rate, laboriously cultivated, whereas in others, it has been but lightly scratched by the plough of investigation.

The value and interest of history depend largely on the degree in which the present is illuminated by the past. Our existing conditions differ so radically from those which prevailed in the times of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and our positive knowledge of the facts of the past has increased so enormously that a new book on Indian history—even though avowedly compressed—must be composed in a new spirit, as it is addressed to a new audience. Certain it is that the history of India does not begin with the battle of Plassey, as some people think it ought to begin, and

that a sound, even if not profound knowledge of the older history will always be a valuable aid in the attempt to solve the numerous problems of modern India.

#### AUTHORITIES

The references here given for pre-Muhammadian history are merely supplementary to those in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914). The easiest book on systems of chronology, suitable for the use of ordinary people, is the *Book of Indian Eras*, by Sir ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink, and Co., 1883). Chronological lists of events are given in *The Chronology of India from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, by C. MAUR. DUFF (Mrs. W. R. RICKMERS), Constable, Westminster, 1899; a good book, no longer quite up to date; and in *The Chronology of Modern India for four hundred years from the close of the fifteenth century (A.D. 1494-1894)*, by J. BURGESS (Grant, Edinburgh, 1913).

For the ancient musical score inscription, of about seventh century A.D. on a rock at Kodumiyamalai in the Pudukottai State, see *Ep. Ind.*, xii, 226.

The extremely ancient Sohgaura copper-plate, perhaps about half a century prior to Asoka, was edited and described by BÜHLER (*Vienna Or. J.*, vol. x (1896), p. 138; and also in *Proc. A. S. B.*, 1894) and FLEET (*J. R. A. S.*, 1907, pp. 509-32); but the document needs further elucidation.

The excavations at Taxila, which are likely to continue for many years, have been described in preliminary reports, e.g., in *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, p. 116. See also *J. P. H. S.*, the *Archaeol. S. Reports*, and *A Guide to Taxila* (1918).

For historical allusions in Tamil literature the student may consult M. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR, *Tamil Studies* (Madras, 1914); and Prof. S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, *Ancient India* (London, Luzac, 1911; and Madras, S.P.C.K. Depository) and *The Beginnings of South Indian History*, 1918.

Too may be read most conveniently in the Popular Edition (2 vols., Routledge, 1914). An annotated edition, prepared by Mr. WILLIAM CROOKE, is ready, but held up by war conditions. The *Mackenzie MSS.* were catalogued by H. H. WILSON (1828; and Madras reprint, 1882). Probably the best small book on the British Period to the Mutiny is *India, History to the End of the E. I. Co.*, by P. E. ROBERTS (Clarendon Press, 1916), in which India Office MS. records have been utilized.

# BOOK I

## ANCIENT INDIA

### CHAPTER I

Prehistoric India ; the elements of the population.

**Antiquity of man.** Man has existed on the earth for a time beyond the possibility of computation, but certainly to be estimated in hundreds of thousands rather than in thousands of years. By far the greater part of the long story of the 'ascent of man' is and always must remain unknown. The extreme limit of human tradition as preserved in Egypt may be placed roughly at 5000 B. C. or 7,000 years from the present day. Beyond that limit nothing can be clearly discerned, nor is any trustworthy estimate of date practicable. Indian tradition does not go back so far as that of Egypt and Babylonia. Evidence, however, exists that certain parts of India were occupied by human beings at a time immensely remote, when the hippopotamus and other strange beasts of which no memory remains dwelt in Indian forests and waters.

**Palaeolithic or 'quartzite' men.** The pleasant belief of poets that primitive man enjoyed in an earthly paradise a golden age free from sin, sorrow, want, and death finds no support from the researches of sober, matter-of-fact science. On the contrary, abundant and conclusive evidence proves that the earliest men, whether in India, Europe, or elsewhere, were rude savages, cowering for shelter under rocks or trees, or roughly housed in caves and huts. They lived by the chase or on jungle produce, and may not have known how to make a fire. They were certainly unable to make pottery and were ignorant of any metal. They were dependent for tools or weapons of all kinds on sticks, stones, and bones. The sticks, of course, have perished, and in India bone implements are rarely found, probably by reason of the white ants. Stone tools, which are imperishable, may be said to constitute the sole memorial of the most ancient Indian men, whose skulls and bones have vanished. They did not construct tombs of any sort. The stone implements, laboriously shaped by chipping into forms suitable for hammering, cutting, boring, and scraping, are found in large numbers in many parts of India, more especially in the districts along the eastern coast. The Madras or Chingleput District presents the 'most numerous and important traces of palaeolithic man known in Southern India'. The chipped stones, which had to serve all purposes of peace or war, are usually



pieces of a rock called quartzite, but when quartzite was not available other hard rocks or minerals were used. The 'quartzite men', as Logan calls them, may possibly have been of the same race as the 'river-drift' men of Europe, who made similar tools; and it is also possible that they may have been preceded in India by some earlier people of whom no trace remains. So far as our positive knowledge extends, or is likely to extend, the 'quartzite men' rank as the oldest inhabitants of India. That stage in the long story of mankind which is marked by the exclusive use of merely chipped stone implements is called technically Palaeolithic, from Greek words meaning 'old stone'.

**Neolithic men.** In the next stage of human advance men were for a long time still ignorant of metals, except gold, and were consequently obliged to continue using stone tools. They did not altogether give up the use of tools merely chipped, but most of their implements, after the chipping had been completed, were ground, grooved, and polished, and thus converted into highly finished objects of various forms, adapted to divers purposes. That further stage of advance is called Neolithic, from Greek words meaning 'new stone'. The remains of Indian neolithic man are far more abundant than those of his palaeolithic forerunner, and have been noted in most provinces. They can be studied to special advantage in the Bellary District, Madras, where Foote discovered the site of an ancient factory, with tools in every stage of manufacture. The neolithic people used pottery, at first hand-made, and later, turned on the potter's wheel. They kept domestic animals, cultivated the land, and were in a state of civilization far above that of palaeolithic man. Several authors suppose that the neolithic folk were not descended from the palaeolithic, and that the two periods were separated by a gap of many centuries or millenniums. That theory, although supported by certain observed facts, is improbable, because gaps rarely occur in nature, and there is little reason to suppose that 'a break in the chain of humanity' ever occurred. The seeming gap probably is to be explained by the imperfection of the record and our consequent ignorance. The neolithic people certainly were the ancestors of the users of metal tools and thus of a large proportion of the existing Indian population. Ample proof exists that the transition from stone to metal was ordinarily gradual, and that both materials often were used side by side. The early metal forms are close copies of the stone forms.

**Burial and cremation.** While the 'quartzite men' presumably were content to leave their dead to be devoured by the beasts, the neolithic people buried theirs and constructed tombs. In Europe sepulchres of neolithic age are extremely numerous, and commonly of the 'megalithic' kind, that is to say, built with huge blocks and slabs of stone arranged so as to form a chamber for the deceased. In India graves of the neolithic period seem to be surprisingly rare, perhaps because they have not been sought. In fact, the only clearly recorded examples appear to be those

found by Cockburn in the Mirzāpur District, U.P., where the bodies interred in deep graves lay extended north and south on stone slabs. The tombs were surrounded by stone circles. The Indian megalithic tombs, of which hundreds have been noted in the peninsula, usually contain iron objects and may be assigned to the Early Iron Age. Similar tombs containing stone implements only do not seem to be recorded. Many prehistoric cemeteries exist in the Tinnevely District along the course of the Tāmraparni river, the most ancient seat of the pearl and chank or conch-shell fishery. The largest covers an area of 114 acres, a fact which implies the former existence of a dense population. The bodies were interred in great earthenware jars. The peculiarities of the Tinnevely interments suggest many problems as yet unsolved.



Burial urn, Tinnevely.

Burial preceded cremation or burning of the dead in most countries, and India appears to conform to that general rule. The Hindu preference for cremation, which has been established for many centuries, seems to be a result of Indo-Aryan Brahmanical influence.

**Mining and trade.** The connexion between the early settlements on the Tāmraparni river and the pearl fishery is not an isolated fact. The position of the neolithic and early iron age settlements of both Europe and Asia was largely determined by the facilities offered for mining and for trade in articles specially valued. Professor Elliot Smith rightly affirms that the coincidence in the distribution of the megalithic monuments of Europe and Asia with that of mining centres is

'far too exact to be due to mere chance. Ancient miners in search of metals or precious stones, or in other cases pearl-fishers, had in every case established camps to exploit these varied sources of wealth; and the megalithic monuments represent their tombs and temples.'<sup>1</sup>

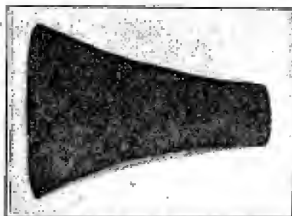
The extraordinary graves in Tinnevely may be those of foreign colonists who settled there for trading purposes, and continued to reside for centuries. Gold-mining was equally attractive to the ancient men, who knew the use of gold long before they acquired a knowledge of copper or iron for the purpose of making tools. A late neolithic settlement, for instance, existed at Maski in the Nizam's Dominions, where the old gold-miners' shafts are the deepest in the world. The mines probably were still worked in the days of Asoka (240 B. C.), who recorded one of his edicts on a rock at Maski.<sup>2</sup> Similar connexions between other Indian

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Memoirs*, vol. 60, part 1, 1915, p. 29 of reprint.

<sup>2</sup> *The Foote Collection of Indian Prehistoric and Protohistoric Antiquities*, Madras, 1916, vol. ii, pp. 28, 125. The inscription has been published in a separate memoir (1915) by the Hyderabad Archaeological Survey.

prehistoric settlements and mines or fisheries will be detected when attention is directed to the subject. The investigation of the prehistoric remains of India has not gone far as yet.

**Iron age; copper age.** In southern India stone tools were superseded directly by iron, without any intermediate step. The time when iron became the ordinary material of tools and weapons is called the Iron or Early Iron Age. In northern India the case is different. There the metal first used for tools, harpoons, swords,



Copper axe (celt).

and spear-heads was copper, practically pure. Copper implements and weapons, often of peculiar forms, but sometimes closely resembling those found in Ireland, have been discovered in large numbers in the Central Provinces, Chutia Nāgpur, old beds of the Ganges near Cawnpore, and elsewhere. Silver objects are associated with them, but no iron.<sup>1</sup> Probably copper tools were in use when the *Rigveda* hymns were composed, but commentators differ. Iron certainly

was known to the authors of the *Atharvaveda*, a very ancient book, and was in common use in 500 B. C. We may safely assume that the metal was utilized in northern India from at least 1000 B. C. It may have been introduced very much earlier, and from Babylonia. The earliest of the copper tools may well be as old as 2000 B. C. In southern India the discovery or introduction of iron may have occurred much later and quite independently.

**No bronze age in India.** In several extensive regions of Europe a Bronze Age intervened between the Neolithic and the Early Iron Periods. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, usually made with about nine parts of copper to one of tin. It is much harder than pure copper and consequently better adapted for the manufacture of tools and weapons. No bronze age can be traced in India. The few Indian implements made of bronze, only five or six in number, which are of early date, vary much in the percentage of tin which they contain, and may have been either imported or made as experiments. It is certain that tools or arms made of bronze never came into general use. The numerous bronze objects found in the megalithic tombs of southern India and in the Tinnevely urns are either ornamental or articles of domestic use, such as bowls. They are never implements or weapons. Many of the bronze objects seem to have been imported. In modern India alloys of copper and zinc are more commonly used than the alloys made with tin.

**Earliest inhabitants of India.** In prehistoric times communication between the north and south must have been difficult and rare. The people of either region presumably knew little or nothing of those in the other, and the two populations probably were

<sup>1</sup> The ancients knew methods of hardening copper, hammering being one, and an admixture of iron another.

totally different in blood. Even now they are very distinct in their ideas and customs, although physical characters have become blended. Peninsular India, built up of the most ancient rocks, has been permanent land for uncounted millions of years. The plains of northern India, on the contrary, were formed ages later by the gradual filling up of a sea with material brought down from the highlands of Asia. Although the sea had been filled up long before the appearance of man on the earth, the surface of the regions now forming the basins of the Indus and Ganges must have taken thousands of years to become fit for human habitation.



COPPER HARPOON.

It is highly probable that the earliest inhabitants of India, whoever they may have been, settled on the ancient high and dry land of the peninsula, and not in the plains of the north. 'Quartzite man', as we have seen, is to be traced for the most part to the south of the Narbadā. Numbers of queer tribes with extraordinary customs, hidden away in different parts of the peninsular area, look like the descendants of the true 'aborigines' or earliest people. Northern India presents fewer such specimens, but certain parts of that region, especially the Aravallis and the Salt Range, are composed of primaeval rocks like the peninsula, and undoubtedly were dry land in a very early stage of the earth's history. In those parts certain tribes now in being may be the descendants of 'aborigines' as ancient, or almost as ancient, as those of the peninsula.

**North and South.** It is desirable to understand and remember that the distinction between the peoples of the north and those of the south goes back far beyond the dawn of history. The peninsula was isolated by reason of its position and ordinarily could not receive either new inhabitants or novel institutions except by sea. The unceasing immigration of strangers by land into northern India, which has made the population there the mixture which it is, did not affect the south, which was shut off by the wide and almost impenetrable barrier of hill and forest, represented by the Narbadā, the Vindhya, and the Sātpura ranges. It is worth while to dwell upon the natural separation of the north from the south even in the most remote ages, because the roots of the present go down deep into the past to a depth far beyond measurement. The incomplete unity of India discussed in the first section of the Introduction depends mainly on the diffusion through the reluctant south of the Hindu ideas of the north, a process which probably had not begun earlier than 1000 B.C. Its slow and

gradual progress forms no small element in the real inner history of India, that history which never has been and hardly can be reduced to writing. The conflict between the Dravidian ideas of the south and the Indo-Aryan ideas of the north, which has lasted for three thousand years more or less, still continues, although on the surface the victory of the north seems to be complete.

**The modern population mixed.** In my judgement it is absolutely impossible to decide who were the earliest inhabitants of India, either in the north or south, or to ascertain whence they came. Nor can we say what their bodily type was. The modern population of India almost everywhere is far too mixed to admit of the disentangling of distinct races each of a well-marked physical type. In the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, where I served, the low-caste Chamār or leather-dresser and even the sweeper (Bhangī, &c.) often is handsome, and better looking than many Brahmans. I do not believe that anything worth knowing is to be learned by measuring the skulls or otherwise noting the physical characters of individuals in a population of such mixed origin. So in England it often happens that in one family, one member will be long-headed (dolicho-cephalic) and another short-headed (brachy-cephalic). The absurdity of classing two brothers as belonging to distinct races because their heads differ in shape is obvious. The inferences drawn by anthropologists in India often have been quite as absurd. The mixture of races on Indian soil was going on for countless ages before any history was recorded, and it is hopeless now to unravel the different lines of descent.

**Two main types: the fair type.** When India as a whole is looked at broadly, without theorizing, anybody can see that the population comprises two main physical types. The tall, fair-skinned, long-nosed, and often handsome type is chiefly found in northern India among the upper Hindu castes and the Muhammadans. It is well exemplified by the Brahmans of Kashmir, who may be of tolerably pure Indo-Aryan descent. The type occurs in southern India among the Nambudri Brahmans of Malabar, whose ancestors came from the north. The ancestry of the tall, fair people in fact is known to a large extent. They are mostly, or perhaps wholly, descended, with more or less intermixture of other strains, from some or other of the innumerable strangers from the north-west who are known to have poured into the basins of the Indus and Ganges during the last four thousand years. Where such immigration has not taken place the type does not occur. Its appearance occasionally among low-caste and outcaste people probably is due to irregular unions.

**The short, dark type.** The second type, short in stature, often ugly in face, snub-nosed, and dark-skinned, is found in almost all the jungle tribes occupying the regions built of primæval rocks, and to a very large extent among the low-caste population of the plains. We may feel assured that the people of that type represent and in great measure are actually descended from the neolithic peoples, or perhaps even from the palæolithic. Some of

the isolated jungle tribes may have preserved their descent comparatively pure, with little admixture of outside blood. The people of the peninsula originally may have been and probably were, as previously said, originally quite distinct from those of the north, but it seems to be impossible to draw any definite line of physical, that is to say, bodily distinction between the bulk of the inhabitants of the two regions at the present time.

**The modified Mongolian type.** A third and less prominent element of the population is now found chiefly in the Himalayan region. The Tibetans may be taken as the type. The Burmese and Gürkhas are more or less similar to them in appearance. All those nations and several other communities exhibit modified forms of the yellow-tinted Mongolian type of the Chinese, and usually are beardless. The evidence of ancient sculptures, as seen at Barhut (Bharhut) and Sānchi, combined with that of certain institutions, indicates clearly that eighteen hundred or two thousand years ago the Tibetan type was much more prominent in the plains of northern India than it is at the present day. In the *Mahabharata*, for instance, we find Draupadi married to five brothers at once. That kind of marriage, technically called polyandry, still is a Tibetan and Himalayan custom, and is absolutely opposed to Aryan principles.<sup>1</sup> The famous Lichchavis of Vaisāli in Tirhūt administered criminal justice on Tibetan lines. Many other proofs might be adduced to show that the Himalayan type was and is a considerable factor in the formation of the mixed population of northern India, especially in Bengal and Bihār.

**Many arrivals of the fair type.** The tall, fair people, as has been said, clearly are descended from immigrants from the north-west, belonging to diverse races, who resembled more or less the Afghans of the border, the Persians, and the Turks of Central Asia. No man can tell when such people began to pour into the tempting plains of India, but the process certainly was going on several thousand years ago and continued with intervals on a large scale until the reign of Bābur in the sixteenth century. Since that time the inflow of strangers from the north-west has been small.

**The Indo-Aryans.** The earliest invaders or settlers about whom anything at all definite is known were the people of the *Rigveda* hymns, who called themselves Aryans, and are conveniently designated as Indo-Aryans in order to distinguish them from their brethren who remained at the other side of the passes. They separated themselves sharply from the non-Aryan dark-skinned early inhabitants of India, and were no doubt tall and fair. They

<sup>1</sup> The term 'phratrogamy' might be coined to denote the form of polyandry which requires all the husbands to be brethren. Polyandry, both in the 'phratrogamic' and the unrestricted form, was prevalent in the highlands of Ceylon until checked by legislation in 1859. The practice may still exist in a quiet way (*Papers on the Custom of Polyandry as practised in Ceylon*, Colombo, Government Printer, 1899).

were akin to the Iranians or Persians, who also called themselves Aryans. It is certain that they slowly worked their way across the Panjāb and down the courses of the Indus and Ganges. Probably they advanced as far as Prayāg (Allahabad) at a tolerably early date, but Bihār and Bengal long continued to be reckoned as non-Aryan countries. The peninsula was not affected at all by the early Indo-Aryan movements. The people there went on their own way and developed a distinct Dravidian form of civilization. The later conversion of southern India to Hinduism was the result of 'peaceful penetration' by missionaries or small colonies, and was not a consequence of the southward march of Indo-Aryan tribes. The amount of Aryan blood in the people to the south of the Narbadā is extremely small, in fact, negligible.

**Lasting effect of Indo-Aryan movements.** The Indo-Aryan movement must have continued for a long time. The guesses of some of the best European scholars place it somewhere between 2400 and 1500 B.C., but they are only guesses, and no near approach to accuracy is possible. Perhaps 2000 B.C. may be taken as a mean date.<sup>1</sup> It is a strange fact that the Vedic Indo-Aryans, the earliest known swarm of immigrants, have stamped an indelible mark on the whole country from the Himālaya to Cape Comorin. Modern Hinduism, however much it may differ from the creed and social usages of the ancient Rishis, undoubtedly has its roots in the institutions and literature of the Vedic Indo-Aryans. Plenty of other strangers have come in since, but none of them, not even the Muslims, have produced effects comparable in magnitude with those resulting from the Indo-Aryan settlements made three or four thousand years ago.

**The Greeks and the Sakas.** Nothing positive is known concerning any influx of foreigners which may have taken place during many centuries after the close of the Indo-Aryan movement, except the comparatively small settlements of Greek origin in

<sup>1</sup> Professor Macdonell inclines to later dates and suggests 1500 B.C. as the earliest limit for the Vedic literature. The estimates which assume considerably earlier dates seem to me more probable. B. G. Tilak goes further than other scholars of reputation, and on astronomical grounds argues temperately that the *Aditi*, or pre-Orion period, the earliest in the Aryan civilization, may be roughly placed between 8000 and 4000 B.C.; that the Orion period, from about 4000 to 2500 B.C., was the most important in the history of Aryan civilization, the separation of the Parsees having taken place between 3000 and 2600 B.C.; that the *Taittirīya Samhitā* and several of the *Brāhmanas* should be assigned to the third period, from 2500 to 1400 B.C., during which the hymns had already become antiquated and unintelligible; that the fourth and last period of the old Sanskrit literature extended from 1400 to 500 B.C., and saw the composition of the *Sūtras* and the evolution of the philosophical literature. I do not possess the knowledge of either astronomy or Vedic texts which would qualify me to pass judgement on Mr. Tilak's startling propositions as expounded in *Orion, or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas*, Ashtekar & Co., Poona, 1916. So far as I understand the matter his dates are carried back too far.



the Panjāb and north-western frontier consequent on Alexander's invasion in 326 B.C. and the existence of the Bactrian kingdom and its offshoots between 246 B.C. and A.D. 50. The next extensive immigration of which any definite knowledge has survived is that of the Sakas, which began in the second century B.C. The term Saka was used by the Indians in a vague way to denote all foreigners from the other side of the passes, without nice distinctions of race or tribe. It may have included both ugly, narrow-eyed Mongols, and handsome races like the Turks, who resemble the Aryans in physique. The Sakas formed kingdoms in the Panjāb, at Mathurā, and in the Kāthiāwār peninsula.

**The Yueh-chi.** In the first century after Christ another nomad tribe from Central Asia called the Yueh-chi descended upon the plains of northern India. Their leading clan, the Kushāns, founded a great empire which extended southwards apparently as far as the Narbadā. The Kushāns appear to have been big fair-complexioned men, probably of Turki race, and possibly akin to the Iranian or Persian Aryans. The Saka and Yueh-chi conquests must have introduced a large element of foreign blood into the Indian population. Obscure indications exist of Iranian invasions in the third century of the Christian era, but nothing definite has been ascertained about them, if they really occurred.



Kushān (Kanishka) coin.

### **The Hūnas or Huns.**

There is no doubt that during the fifth and sixth centuries great multitudes of fierce folk from the Central Asian steppes swooped down on both Persia and India. Those invaders are called by the Indians Hūnas, or in English Huns, a term used in a general sense like the earlier term Sakas, to cover a mass of various tribes.<sup>1</sup> Other Huns who invaded Europe are known to have been hideous creatures of the Mongolian kind; but the assailants of India are distinguished as Ephthalites or White Huns, a name which may imply that they were fair people like the Turks. Many of the Rājput castes or clans, as well as the Jāts, Gūjars, and certain other existing communities, are descended either from the Hūnas or from allied hordes which arrived about the same time. The appearance of the existing castes so descended indicates that their foreign ancestors must have been mostly of the tall, fair, good-looking type. The population of the Panjāb and the United Provinces is free from Mongolian features except in the sub-Himalayan and Himalayan regions.

The Hun irruptions mark a distinct epoch in the history of northern India, the significance of which will be explained later.

<sup>1</sup> A Brahman author, writing about A. D. 1600, applied the term to the Portuguese.



They are mentioned prominently in this place because they contributed some of the best elements to the population.

**Type of Muhammadan settlers.** The last movement which introduced a large new class of recruits to the Indian population was that of the Muhammadans, beginning with the inroads of the Arabs at the commencement of the eighth century and ending with the establishment of the Mogul dynasty in the sixteenth century. Subsequent Musalmān immigration has been on a small scale. The Muslim invaders and settlers, other than the Arab conquerors of Sind, belonged to various Asiatic races, including a certain number of narrow-eyed, yellow-tinted, beardless Mongols. But the majority were collected from nations or tribes of better appearance, and were tall, good-looking, fair-complexioned, bearded men. They comprised Iranian Persians akin to the Indo-Aryans, Turks, Afghans of many varieties, and sundry peoples of mixed descent. The admixture of Mongol blood having been overborne by the other elements has left little trace in the features of modern Indian Muslims. The effect of the immigration on the whole has been to increase materially the proportion of tall, fair-complexioned people in the country. The physical type of the Muhammadan immigrants was far more like that of the Indo-Aryan Brahmans than it was to the dark 'aboriginal' type indigenous in India.

**Rapid spread of Islām.** The rapidity of the spread of Islām, the religion of Muhammad, and the dramatic suddenness with which the adherents of his creed rose to a position of dominant sovereignty constitute one of the marvels, or it might be said the miracles of history. No cut-and-dry explanation that can be offered is felt to account adequately for the astounding facts. But history records not a few other unexplained marvels, and we must be content to acknowledge that many things in the past, as in the present, pass man's understanding.

The prophet Muhammad, a native of Mecca, was more than fifty years of age before he attained any considerable success. He believed himself to be the divinely appointed messenger of a revelation destined to supersede the Jewish and Christian religions, as well as the rude paganism of his countrymen. His fellow citizens at Mecca were so hostile that in A.D. 622 he was obliged to quit his birthplace and take refuge at Medina. That event, renowned as the Flight, or Hijra, is the epoch of the Muhammadan Hijrī Era, vulgarly called the Hegira.<sup>1</sup> The remaining ten years of his life sufficed to make him substantially the sovereign of Arabia and the accepted Prophet of the Arabs. Soon after his death in A.D. 632 his successors, the early Khalifs ('Caliphs'), found themselves in conflict with the mighty Persian and Byzantine empires. Nothing could withstand the furious enthusiasm of the

<sup>1</sup> Muhammadan dates are usually designated as A.H. (*anno hegiræ*). For example, A.H. 1335=A.D. 1916-17, from October to October. The Hijrī year is lunar, of about 354 days, and so is 11 days shorter than the solar year.

Arabs from the desert, beneath whose attack ancient thrones tottered and fell.

Within the brief space of eighty years from the Prophet's death his Arab followers had become the masters, not only of Arabia, but of Persia, Syria, western Turkistan, Sind, Egypt, and southern Spain. They carried their new religion with them, and either imposed it on their opponents at the point of the sword, or compelled them to ransom their lives by heavy payments.

**Islām in the borderlands.** The Indian borderlands soon attracted the attention of the Khalīfs. The Arabs reached the coast of Makrān as early as A. D. 643. The conquest of Sind was effected by Muhammad bin Kāsim in A. D. 712, and thenceforward for centuries that country remained under Arab rule. Kābul was subdued or made tributary at a later date. From the beginning of the eighth century many Arabs and Muslims of other nations must have settled in Sind and the neighbouring countries, effecting a marked change in the character of the population. But India proper remained substantially unaffected, although Arab traders occasionally visited the western kingdoms for business purposes. The Indian Rājās rarely troubled themselves about events taking place to the west of the Hakra river, then the boundary between Sind and Hind.<sup>1</sup>

**Islām in India proper.** The annexation of the Panjāb to the Ghazni kingdom about A. D. 1020 by Sultan Mahmūd necessarily involved extensive settlement of Muslim strangers in that province, although the rest of India continued to be free from their presence. From the closing years of the twelfth century, when Muhammad of Ghōr began the systematic conquest of the country, a constant stream of Muslim immigrants continued to flow in; and during the period of the growth of the Sultanate of Delhi newcomers arrived without ceasing. During the decline of the Sultanate from 1340 to 1526 the immigration must have diminished, but in the latter year it received a fresh impetus from the victories of Bābur. During the next two centuries a certain number of Muhammadans from beyond the border effected a lodgement, although the total was not very great. The older colonies, however, multiplied, crowds of converts from Hinduism were made, and intermarriages between the old and new Muslims took place. The tendency of the Muslim population is to increase, its fertility being superior to that of the Hindus. The immigrant Muhammadans, although thoroughly naturalized, retain their distinctness and never become merged in the Hindu majority, as their predecessors the Sakas, Hūnas, and the rest were absorbed. The reason is to be found in the definite character of the Muslim creed resting on scriptures of known date, and consisting essentially of only two doctrines, the unity of God and the divine mission of Muhammad. That simple creed inspires intense devotion and

<sup>1</sup> The Hakra, which finally dried up in the eighteenth century, used to flow through the Bahāwalpur State and the region which is now the Sind desert.

*of which the lesson is that the world is not a permanent place*  
*at*

offers unbroken resistance to the seductions of Hinduism, although Indo-Muhammadan social practice is affected considerably by its surroundings. The looser beliefs of the early immigrants from Central Asia were not strong enough to withstand the subtle influence of the Brahmanical environment. The Shamanism of the nomad invaders, like the demon-worship of the Dravidians, yielded before the attractive force of the Hindu system, so that each successive wave of pre-Muhammadan foreigners quickly melted away in the ocean of caste.

**Smaller foreign communities.** Since the fifteenth century a considerable population of mixed Indo-European blood, originating from unions of Portuguese, English, and other Europeans with Indian women, has grown up, which forms an important element in the population of the great cities, the Bombay Konkan, and the settlements on the lower Himalayan ranges.

The Jews, Parsees, Armenians, and certain other small foreign communities maintain their isolation so strictly that they hardly affect the racial character of the general population.

**Language no proof of race.** Sanskrit, with its derivative vernaculars; the old Persian, or Zend language; Greek, Latin, German, English, and many other European tongues, form a well-defined group or family of languages which is designated either as Indo-Germanic or as Aryan. Many authors have shown a tendency to assume that the various peoples who speak Aryan tongues must be of Aryan race, connected one with the other more or less closely by ties of blood. That assumption is wholly unwarranted. Community of language is no proof of community of blood. The population of India, as we have seen, comprises extremely various elements, descended from all sorts of people who formerly spoke all sorts of languages. In the north, for instance, no trace remains of the Central Asian tongues spoken by the diverse tribes comprised under the terms Saka, Hūna, or Yueh-chi. The descendants of those people now speak Hindī and other languages closely related to Sanskrit. Similar cases may be observed all over the world. Languages become extinct and are replaced by others spoken by races whose position gives them an advantage. Thus, in Great Britain, the Cornish language is absolutely extinct, and the Cornish people, who are of different race from the English, now speak nothing but English.

Aryan ideas and institutions have shown marvellous power and vitality in all parts of India, but the proportion of Aryan blood in the veins of the population, which is small almost everywhere, is non-existent in some provinces.

**Languages.** The most important family of Indian languages, the Aryan, comprises all the principal languages of northern and western India, Hindī, Bengālī, Marāthī, Gujarātī, and many others, descended from ancient vernaculars or Prākṛits, closely akin both to the Vedic and to the later literary forms of Sanskrit.

The family or group of tongues second in importance is the Dravidian in the peninsula, comprising Tamil, Telugu, Malayālam,

Kanarese, and Tulu, besides some minor tongues. Both Tamil and Telugu have rich literatures. The Tamil is the principal and perhaps the oldest language of the group. The grammar and structure of the Dravidian speech differ wholly from the Aryan type. The most ancient Tamil literature, dating from the early centuries of the Christian era, or even earlier, was composed on Dravidian lines and independent of Sanskrit models. The later literature in all the languages has been largely influenced by Brahmanical ideas and diction. The linguistic family is called Dravidian because *Dravida* was the ancient name of the Tamil country in the far south. In fact, Tamil is really the same word as the adjective *Drāvīda*. Three other families of languages, namely, the Munda, the Mon-Khmêr, and the Tibeto-Chinese, are represented on Indian soil, but as they possess little or no literature, and are mostly spoken by rude, savage, or half-civilized tribes, it is unnecessary to discuss their peculiarities. The speakers of those tongues have had small influence on the course of history.

**The Indo-Aryan movement.** The Indo-Aryans, after they had entered the Panjâb—the ‘land of the five rivers’, or ‘of the seven rivers’ according to an ancient reckoning—travelled generally in a south-easterly direction. For reasons unknown they called the south *dakshina*, or ‘right-hand’, a word familiar in its English corruption as ‘the Deccan’. The larger part of the tribes crossed the Panjâb and then moved along the courses of the Ganges and Jumna, but some sections at an early period had advanced a considerable distance down the Indus, while others, at a later date, apparently marched eastward along the base of the mountains into Mithilâ or Tirhût. While resident in the Panjâb the strangers had not yet become Hindus, but were only Hindus in the making. The distinctive Brahmanical system appears to have been evolved, after the Sutlaj had been passed, in the country to the north of Delhi. The apparently small tract between the rivers Sarasvatî and Drishadvatî, which it is difficult to identify with precision, is specially honoured by Manu as *Brahmāvarta*, ‘the land of the gods’; the less-exalted title of *Brahmarshi-desa*, ‘the land of divine sages’, being given to the larger region comprising *Brahmāvarta* or *Kurukshetra*, roughly equivalent to the tract about *Thānēsar*, with the addition of *Matsya* or eastern *Rājputāna*, *Panchāla*, or the *Doāb* between the Ganges and Jumna, and *Surasena*, or the *Mathurā* district.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The difficulty in precise identification of the *Sarasvatî* and *Drishadvatî* is due to the extensive changes in the course of the rivers of northern India which are known to have occurred. Modern maps are utterly misleading, and it is impossible to construct maps of the ancient river system for any time preceding the Muhammadan invasions. The following passage may be commended to the attention of careful students: ‘It is, however, a reasonable conjecture that within the period of history the *Sutlej* united with the *Sarasvatî* and *Ghaggar* to form the great river [*sic*. *Hakrā*] which once flowed into the Indus through *Bahawalpur*, and that then *Brahmāvarta* was a *Doāb* [space between rivers] which

When the legal treatise ascribed to Manu had assumed its present shape, perhaps about A.D. 200 or earlier, the whole space between the Himālaya and the Vindhya from sea to sea was recognized as Āryāvarta, or 'Aryan territory'. The advance thus indicated evidently was a slow business and occupied a long time. The dark-skinned inhabitants of the country subdued by the invaders were called Dasyus and by other names. They are now represented generally by the lower castes in the plains and by certain tribes in hilly regions.

**Aryan penetration of the south.** Although there is no reason to believe that any large Indo-Aryan tribal body ever marched into the peninsula, which was well protected by the broad belt of hills and forests marked by the Nerbada river and the Sātpura and Vindhya ranges, the peaceful penetration of the Deccan by Indo-Aryan emissaries began many centuries before the Christian era. Tradition credits the Vedic Rishi Agastya, or a namesake of his, with the introduction of Aryan ideas and institutions into the Dravidian south. Probably the chief line of communication was along the eastern coast, and certainly the propagation of the new ideas was effected by Brahmans. The obscure story of the gradual advance of the caste system and other Indo-Aryan institutions in India to the south of the Nerbada has not yet been thoroughly investigated, and it is impossible to discuss the subject in these pages.

**Distinct Dravidian civilization.** When the Brahmans succeeded in making their way into the kingdoms of the peninsula, including the realms of the Āndhras, Cheras, Cholas, and Pāndyas, they found a civilized society, not merely a collection of rude barbarian tribes. The Dravidian religion and social customs differed widely from those of northern India. Caste was unknown, as it now is in Burma, and the religion is described as demon-worship. The original demons have since been adopted by the Brahmans, given new names, and identified with orthodox Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindu theory that mankind is divided into four *varnas*, or groups of castes—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sūdra—was wholly foreign to the southerners. To this day Kshatriyas and Vaisyas do not exist among them.<sup>1</sup> The laws of marriage and inheritance also differed completely from those of the Brahmans. Even now, when Hinduism, with its strict caste rules and its recognized system of law, has gained the mastery, the old and quite different Dravidian ideas may be traced in a thousand directions. The ancient Dravidian alphabet called Vatteluttu, of Semitic origin, is wholly distinct from any of the northern alphabets. Tradition as recorded in the ancient Tamil literature indicates that from very remote times wealthy cities existed in the south and that many of the refinements and luxuries might be compared with that of the Ganges and Jumna (C. Pearson, 'Alexander, Porus, and the Panjāb', in *Ind. Ant.*, vol. xxxiv, 1905, p. 254).

<sup>1</sup> The fact is not affected by the ludicrous efforts of certain castes to obtain recognition as Kshatriyas.

of life were in common use. The good fortune of Tamil Land (*Tamilakam*) in possessing such eagerly desired commodities as gold, pearls, conch-shells, pepper, beryls, and choice cotton goods attracted foreign traders from the earliest ages.<sup>1</sup> Commerce supplied the wealth required for life on civilized lines, and the Dravidians were not afraid to cross the seas. Some day, perhaps, the history of Dravidian civilization may be written by a competent scholar skilled in all the lore and languages required for the study of the subject, but at present the literature concerned with it is too fragmentary, defective, and controversial to permit of condensation. Early Indian history, as a whole, cannot be viewed in true perspective until the non-Aryan institutions of the south receive adequate treatment. Hitherto most historians of ancient India have written as if the south did not exist.

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**Languages.** Sir G. GRIERSON, (1) chap. vii in vol. i, *I. G.*, 1907, with ample list of references; (2) *The Languages of India*, Calcutta, 1903, reprinted from *Census Report, India*, 1901; (3) *Linguistic Survey of India*, not yet completed. The work is on a vast scale, and eleven large quarto volumes or parts have appeared. Several more volumes are yet to come.

**Dravidian religion.** WHITEHEAD, *The Village Gods of South India*, Oxford University Press, 1916; ELMORE, *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism*, Hamilton, N.Y., 1915 (reprinted from *University Studies of the University of Nebraska*, 1915).

<sup>1</sup> The Tamil Land of early ages was much more extensive than the area in which Tamil is now spoken. It included the Kanarese, Malayalam, and Tulu-speaking countries. Ceylon, too, was in close relations with the Tamil-speaking peoples of the mainland. The jewels and spices of the island may therefore be reckoned among the attractions of Tamil Land. The Telugu-speaking country possessed cotton manufactures and diamond mines.

## CHAPTER 2

- Literature and Civilization of the Vedic and Epic Periods ; the *Purānas* ; caste.

**Isolation of the oldest literature.** The Vedic Indo-Aryans, whose progress has been sketched in bare outline, are known to us through their literature only, which is all, or almost all, so ancient that it cannot be illustrated either by contemporary books or from monuments. No literature in any Indo-European or Aryan language is nearly as old as the hymns of the *Rigveda*, which 'stands quite by itself, high up on an isolated peak of remote antiquity'; and even if some literary fragments from Egypt or Babylonia in languages of different families be as old, they do not help us to understand the Vedic scriptures. No buildings of anything like Vedic age survive in India, nor are there any contemporary material remains, except the copper tools and weapons of the north already mentioned, which may be reasonably assigned to an early stage of the Vedic period. The oldest Indo-Aryan literature, as a rule, must be interpreted by means of itself, and we must be content to learn from it alone what we can discover about the Indo-Aryans whose Rishis composed that literature. External sources of information are almost wholly wanting, but the *Zend-Avesta*, the scriptures of the ancient Iranians or Persians, although not so old as the Veda, contributes illustrative matter of value.

**The Veda ; faith and science.** The oldest literature of the Indo-Aryans is known collectively as Veda, which means 'knowledge'—the best of all knowledge in Hindu eyes. It is also designated in the plural as 'the Vedas', 'the three Vedas', or 'the four Vedas'. Most Hindus accept the whole Veda, forming in itself an enormous literature, as inspired revelation (*sruti*) in opposition to later venerable books classed as traditional learning (*smṛiti*). But the adherents of the Ārya Samāj, and possibly those of some other sects, allow the rank of revealed matter to the hymns alone, while denying it to the rest of the Veda. The belief that the Vedas were revealed complete as they stand without any process of development seems to be widely held,<sup>1</sup> and means for reconciling such belief with the results of scientific investigation of the documents may not be beyond the powers of human ingenuity. In these pages theories of inspiration will not be further noticed, and the Vedic literature will be treated merely as what it professes to be, the production of individual men and a few women, who composed their works at times widely separated and with varying degrees of literary power.

The Veda, regarded as literature, demands from students of humanity the most respectful attention on account of its remote antiquity, its unique character, and the light which it sheds upon

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins (p. 3) quotes the saying :

*Na hi chhandānsi-kṛyante, nityāni chhandānsi ;*  
'Vedic verses are not made, they are eternal.'

the evolution of mankind, especially in India. The *Rigveda*, as Whitney observes, contains 'the germs of the whole after-development of Indian religion and polity'.

**Definition of the Veda.** Opinions have varied concerning the definition of the Veda. Kautilya, in the *Arthasāstra* ascribed to the fourth century B.C., states that

'the three Vedas, Sāma, Rik, and Yajus, constitute the triple Vedas. These together with Atharvaveda and the Itihāsavēda are known as the Vedas. . . . Purāṇa, Itivṛtta (history), Akhyāyika (tales), Udāharana (illustrative stories), Dharmasāstra, and Arthasāstra are (known by the name) Itihāsa.'<sup>1</sup>

Kautilya's definition is wider than that ordinarily accepted, which excludes the later, although ancient literature comprised by him under the comprehensive term *Itihāsa*. Common usage recognizes four and only four Vedas, namely (1) the *Rigveda*,<sup>2</sup> (2) the *Sāmaveda*, (3) the *Yajurveda*, and (4) the *Atharvaveda*.

The claim of the last named to be included in the canon has not always been recognized, and not long ago it could be said that 'the most influential Brahmans of southern India still refuse to accept the authority of the fourth Veda, and deny its genuineness'.

But for most people the Vedas are four, and must be described as such.

**Contents of the Veda.** The essential fundamental part of each of the four Vedas is a *samhitā*, or collection of metrical hymns, prayers, spells, or charms, mixed in some cases with prose passages. But certain supplementary writings are also considered by general consent to be actually part of the Vedas, and are regarded by many Hindus as inspired revelation like the *samhitās*. Those supplements written in prose are the *Brāhmanas* and the *Upanishads*. The *Brāhmanas* are theological and ritual treatises designed as manuals of worship and explanations of the *samhitās*. They are of considerably later date than the verses but still very ancient, and in some cases preserve the written accent, which was disused very early. They are the oldest examples of Indo-European or Aryan continuous prose composition. The *Brāhmanas* include certain mystic treatises called *Āraṇyakas*, or 'Forest-books', supposed to be 'imparted or studied in the solitude of the forest'. The *Upanishads*, exceeding a hundred in number, are philosophical tracts or books, 'which belong to the latest stage of Brāhmana

<sup>1</sup> *Arthasāstra*, revised translation by R. Shama Sastri (Bangalore Government Press, 1915), Book I, chaps. 3, 5, pp. 7, 11. Kautilya, it will be observed, places the *Sāmaveda* first.

<sup>2</sup> The name *Rigveda* is a compound of the words *rich* and *veda*, *ch* becoming *g* by the rules of *sandhi*. *Rich* signifies 'any prayer or hymn in which a deity is praised. As these are mostly in verse, the term becomes also applicable to such passages of any *Veda* as are reducible to measure according to the rules of prosody. The first *Veda*, in Vyāsa's compilation, comprehending most of these texts, is called the *Rigveda*; or as expressed in the Commentary on the Index, "because it abounds in such texts (*rich*)" (Colebrooke).



literature'. Certain of the *Upanishads* are the parts of the Veda best known to Hindu readers in modern days, as being the foundation of the later and more systematic Vedānta philosophy.

**The Sūtras.** The *Sūtras*, 'compendious treatises dealing with Vedic ritual on the one hand, and with customary law on the other', are admitted by all to rank only as traditional learning (*smṛiti*), but they are usually regarded as included in the Veda. They are written in a laboriously compressed style, sometimes approaching the structure of algebraic formulas, unintelligible without the help of authoritative commentaries. Such exaggerated value used to be attached to mere brevity of expression that a *sūtra* writer was supposed to derive as much pleasure from the saving of a short vowel as from the birth of a son. The *Sūtras* comprise the *Śrauta*, dealing with the ritual of the greater sacrifices; the *Grihya*, explaining the ceremonial of household worship; and *Dharma*, treating of social and legal usage. The third section is that which mainly concerns the historian, being the foundation of the *Dharmasāstras*, such as the well-known *Laws of Manu*, so called.

**Sāma- and Yajurvedas.** Having enumerated the principal classes of works usually included in the Veda, we return to the metrical *samhitās* which are the real Veda. Only two need be noticed particularly, because the Sāma- and Yajurvedas are comparatively unimportant. The former is a hymn-book, 'practically of no independent value, for it consists entirely of stanzas (excepting only 75) taken from the *Rigveda* and arranged solely with reference to their place in the Soma sacrifice'. The *Yajurveda*, which also borrows much matter from the *Rigveda* and exists in several forms, is a book of sacrificial prayers, and includes some prose formulas.

**The Rigveda samhitā.** The *Rigveda* unquestionably is the oldest part of the literature and the most important of the Vedas from the literary point of view. The *samhitā* contains 1,017 (or by another reckoning 1,028) hymns, arranged in ten books, of which the tenth certainly is the latest. The collection about equals in bulk the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together. Books II-VII, known as the 'family books', because they are attributed to the members of certain families, form 'the nucleus of the *Rigveda*, to which the remaining books were successively added'.

**Difficulties of the Vedic hymns.** The Vedic hymns present innumerable difficulties to the student. The language and grammar, which differ widely from those of the 'classical' Sanskrit, require profound expert investigation before the verses can be compelled to yield sense so as to permit the text to be construed. Even when a literal version in more or less grammatical English has been produced, the meaning behind the words often eludes the translator. The ideas of the Rishis are so remote from those of the modern world that the most learned Sanskritist, whether Indian or foreign, may fail to grasp them. Interpretations consequently differ to an enormous extent, and after all possible has been said and done much remains obscure. Subject to such inherent difficulties and

to necessary limitations of space, I will try to give the reader some slight notion of the contents of the *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* hymnals, to indicate the nature of the poets' religion, and to draw a faint sketch of the social condition of the Indo-Aryans.

**The poetry of the Veda.** Professor Macdonell observes that 'by far the greater part of the poetry of the *Rigveda* consists of religious lyrics, only the tenth [and latest] book containing some secular poems. . . . The *Rigveda* is not a collection of primitive popular poetry. . . . It is rather a body of skilfully composed hymns produced by a sacerdotal class,' for use in a ritual which was not so simple as has been sometimes supposed. The metres and arrangement are the highly artificial work of persons who may be justly called learned, although probably ignorant of the art of writing. The same competent critic holds that, although the poetry is often marred for our taste by obvious blunders, the diction is generally simple and unaffected, the thought direct, and the imagery frequently beautiful or even noble. The poems naturally vary much in literary merit, having been composed by many diverse authors at different times. The best may be fairly called sublime, while the worst are mechanical and commonplace.

**Subject-matter.** Most of the hymns are invocations addressed to the gods, conceived as the powers of nature personified. Agni, or Fire, and Indra, primarily the god of thunder, and secondarily the god of battle, are the favourite deities. Indeed the religion may be regarded as being based upon fire-worship. The gods are represented as great and powerful, disposed to do good to their worshippers, and engaged in unceasing conflict with the powers of evil. The poets usually beg for material favours and seek to win the deity's good will by means of prayers and sacrifices. Nothing indicates that images were used as aids to worship. The Heaven or Sky, personified as Varuna, is the subject of striking poems, and the Sun is addressed as Sūrya, or by other names in several compositions of much merit.

Two specimens of *Rigveda* poetry may help readers to form some estimate of the poetic skill of the Rishis and to appreciate their religious aspirations.

**Hymn to the Dawn.** The first is part of a hymn to the Dawn (*Ushas*), who is styled by Professor Macdonell 'this fairest creation of Vedic poetry'. The rendering is his.

#### TO THE DAWN

(*R. V.*, i, 113; *Hist. of Sanskrit Liter.* (1900), p. 83.)

There Heaven's Daughter has appeared before us,  
The maiden flushing in her brilliant garments.  
Thou sovran lady of all earthly treasure,  
Auspicious Dawn, flush here to-day upon us.

In the sky's framework she has shone with splendour;  
The goddess has cast off the robe of darkness.  
Wakening up the world with ruddy horses,  
Upon her well-yoked chariot Dawn is coming.

Bringing upon it many bounteous blessings,  
 Brightly shining, she spreads her brilliant lustre.  
 Last of the countless morns that have gone by,  
 First of bright morns to come has Dawn arisen.

Arise! the breath, the life, again has reached us :  
 Darkness has gone away and light is coming.  
 She leaves a pathway for the sun to travel :  
 We have arrived where men prolong existence.

**The tenth book.** Commentators have different views concerning the exact meaning of the Rigvedic mythology, some denying that the gods addressed severally were really regarded as separate beings. However that may be, the latest book, the tenth, exhibits a somewhat advanced aspect of religious thought which prepares the way for the speculations of the Upaniads and the Vedānta. From among the many versions of the celebrated Creation Hymn, 'the earliest specimen of Aryan philosophic thought', I choose the metrical rendering by Max Müller, who wrote it with the aid of a friend.

#### CREATION HYMN

(*R. V.*, x, 129 ; *Chips from a German Workshop* (1869), vol. i, p. 78).

Nor Aught nor Nought existed ; yon bright sky  
 Was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.  
 What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?  
 Was it the water's fathomless abyss?  
 There was not death—yet was there nought immortal,  
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;  
 The only One breathed breathless by itself,  
 Other than It there nothing since has been.  
 Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled  
 In gloom profound—an ocean without light—  
 The germ that still lay covered in the husk  
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.  
 Then first came love upon it, the new spring  
 Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,  
 Pondering, this bond between created things  
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth  
 Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?  
 Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—  
 Nature below, and power and will above—  
 Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here,  
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?  
 The Gods themselves came later into being—  
 Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?  
 He from whom all this great creation came,  
 Whether his will created or was mute,  
 The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,  
 He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.

**The Atharvaveda.** The *Atharvaveda* or *Atharvana* is described as being on the whole 'a heterogeneous collection of spells . . .

<sup>1</sup> Macdonell translates better :

Desire then at the first arose within it,  
 Desire, which was the earliest seed of spirit.

a collection of the most popular spells current among the masses', and consequently breathing the spirit of a prehistoric age. Some of its formulas may go back to the most remote ages prior even to the separation of the Indo-Aryans from the Iranians. The fact that the book preserves so much old-world lore makes it rather more interesting and important for the history of civilization than the *Rigveda* itself. But it is far inferior as literature. The *Atharvaveda* may now be read at small cost in the literal annotated version by Whitney as revised by Lanman. Although every line has been Englished word for word, much remains unintelligible as it stands in the translation.

**A specimen spell.** A specimen, selected chiefly because it is short, will illustrate the character of the spells, and the extreme obscurity of the subject-matter.

#### AGAINST THE POISON OF SNAKES

(*A. V.*, vi, 12, Whitney and Lanman, vol. i, p. 280.)

'1. I have gone about the race of snakes, as the sun about the sky, as night about living creatures other than the swan; thereby do I ward off thy poison.

2. What was known of old by priests, what by seers, what by gods; what is to be, that has a mouth—therewith do I ward off thy poison.

3. With honey I mix the streams; the rugged mountains are honey; honey is the Pârushni [a river], the Sipālā; weal be to thy mouth, weal to thy heart.'

Such sentences read very like nonsense at first sight. They must, of course, have had a definite meaning for the author, which may be discoverable, but it is not easy to make sense of them. The spell quoted is a perfectly fair sample of the collection and the translation.

**A notable poem.** Fortunately, the *Atharvaveda* includes some compositions of a higher order, although, as Lanman observes, they are 'few indeed'. The best known of such passages, that expressing the omniscience of the heavens personified as Varuna, deserves quotation. The sentiments and diction find many echoes in the Hebrew poetry of the Old Testament.

#### THE OMNISCIENCE OF VARUNA

(*A. V.*, iv, 16, 1-5; after Muir, in Kaegi, p. 65.)

As guardian, the Lord of worlds  
Sees all things as if near at hand.  
In secret what 'tis thought to do  
That to the gods is all displayed.

Whoever moves or stands, who glides in secret,  
Who seeks a hiding-place, or hastens from it,  
What thing two men may plan in secret council,  
A third, King Varuna, perceives it also.

And all this earth King Varuna possesses,  
His the remotest ends of yon broad heaven;  
And both the seas in Varuna lie hidden,<sup>1</sup>  
But yet the smallest water-drop contains him.

<sup>1</sup> 'Also the two oceans are Varuna's paunches' (Lanman);

'The loins of Varuna are these two oceans' (Macdonell).

Although I climbed the furthest heaven, fleeing,  
I should not there escape the monarch's power;  
From heaven his spies descending hasten hither,  
With all their thousand eyes the world surveying.

Whate'er exists between the earth and heaven,  
Or both beyond, to Varuna lies open.  
The winkings of each mortal eye be numbers,  
He wields the universe, as dice a player.

**The Indo-Aryan tribes.** The Indo-Aryan invasion or immigration evidently was a prolonged movement of a considerable number of tribes, five or more, apparently related one to the other, who called themselves collectively *Āryas*, as the Iranians did.<sup>1</sup> The term *Ārya*, which seems originally to have meant merely 'kinsman', was understood in later times to imply nobility or respectability of birth, as contrasted with *Anārya*, 'ignoble'. The habits of the tribes, while dwelling to the west of the Indus, were those of an agricultural and pastoral people, who reckoned their wealth in terms of cows. The description of the Indo-Aryans by some writers of authority as 'nomads' is opposed to the evidence of the hymns. Many passages of the *Rigveda*, both in the earliest and the latest books, testify to the habitual cultivation of *yava*, which primarily means 'barley', but may include wheat, which is not mentioned separately.<sup>2</sup>

The tribes as they settled down in interior India naturally would have become more agricultural and less pastoral, like the Gūjars and Āhīrs of later ages. Some of the tribal names, as, for example, Pūru and Chedi,<sup>3</sup> survived into the Epic period, while many died out. Each tribe was a group of families, and in each family the father was master. The whole tribe was governed by a Rājā, whose power was checked to an undefined extent by a tribal council. The tribes dwelt in fortified villages, but there were no towns. The details recorded suggest that the life of the people was not unlike that of many tribes of Afghanistan in modern times before the introduction of fire-arms.<sup>4</sup>

**Arts of peace and war.** The bow and arrow were the principal weapons, but spears and battle-axes were not unknown. Chariots, each carrying a driver and a fighting man, were employed in battle,

<sup>1</sup> Compare the story of the gradual Hellenization of the land of Greece (Bury, chap. i, sec. 4).

<sup>2</sup> e.g. *R. V.*, x, 184, 2 'As men whose fields are full of barley reap the ripe corn removing it in order'; and vii, 87, 10 'barley cut or gathered up' (Griffith). Barley is grown all over north-western India, in Afghanistan and in the Himalayan valleys up to a height of 14,000 feet. Rice, unknown to the *Rigveda*, is often mentioned in the *Ātharvaveda*, e.g. iv, 34, 35. But the theory that the Indians originally were nomads is supported by Megasthenes, who was told that 'the Indians were in old times nomads like those Scythians who do not plough but wander about in their waggons, &c.' (Arrian, *Indika*, chap. 7).

<sup>3</sup> Pūru seems to be the Pōros of Greek authors.

<sup>4</sup> Discussion concerning the original seat or home of the Aryans is omitted purposely, because no hypothesis on the subject seems to be established.

a fact which implies considerable advance in the mechanical arts. Armour was worn. The Rigvedic Indo-Aryans were also acquainted with the processes of weaving, tanning, and metallurgy, although their knowledge of iron is doubtful. We have seen that the copper implements of the Gangetic basin may reasonably be referred to Rigvedic times. Bronze tools and weapons were not ordinarily used. Gold was familiar and was made into jewellery. The tribes fought with each other when so disposed, but all united in hostility to the dark-skinned Indians, whom they despised, and whose lands they annexed.

**Diet.** The Indo-Aryans, while sharing the ancient Iranian veneration for the cow, felt no scruple about sacrificing both bulls and cows at weddings or on other important occasions. The persons who took part in the sacrifice ate the flesh of the victim, whether bull, cow, or horse. But meat was eaten only as an exception. Milk was an important article of food, and was supplemented by cakes of barley or wheat (*yava*), vegetables, and fruit.

**Strong drinks.** The people freely indulged in two kinds of intoxicating liquor, called *soma* and *sura*. The Parsees of Yezd and Kirmān in Persia, as well as those of the Deccan and Bombay in India, who still occasionally offer *soma* sacrifices, identify the plant with one or other species of *Asclepias* or *Sarcostemma*. The plants of that genus have a milky juice which can be transformed into a rather unpleasant drink. But the real *soma* plant may have been different, and has not yet been clearly identified.<sup>1</sup> *Sura* probably was a kind of beer. *Soma* juice was considered to be particularly acceptable to the gods, and was offered with elaborate ceremonial. The *Sāmaveda* provides the chants appropriate for the ceremonies.

**Amusements.** Amusements included dancing, music, chariot-racing, and dicing. Gambling with dice is mentioned so frequently in both the *Rigveda* and the later documents that the prevalence of the practice is beyond doubt. One stanza from the well-known 'Gambler's Lament' (*R. V.*, x, 34, in Kaegi, p. 84) may be quoted :

My wife rejects me and her mother hates me ;  
The gamester finds no pity for his troubles,  
No better use can I see for a gambler,  
Than for a costly horse worn out and aged.

**Dimness of the picture.** When all possible care has been bestowed on the drawing of the outline, it must be confessed that the picture of the Indo-Aryans in the Rigvedic period remains indistinct and shadowy. The impossibility of fixing the age of the poems or of the life which they illustrate within limits defined even approximately leaves the Indo-Aryans suspended in the air, so to speak, and unconnected with any ascertained historical realities. The difficulties of the language of the poems, the strange modes of expression, and the remoteness of the ideas hinder

<sup>1</sup> Kautilya prescribes that 'Brāhmins shall be provided with forests for *soma* plantation' (*Arthasāstra*, Book II, chap. 2). See also *Jātakas*, Nos. 525 and 537.

a vivid realization of the people by whom and for whom the literature was produced. The matter of the greater part of the *Ātharva-veda*, as already observed, produces an impression of prehistoric antiquity even deeper than that produced by the *Rigveda*, although it is certain that the book, as a book, is later in date.

**Vedic Aryans and Hinduism.** However dim may be the picture of the life of the Vedic Indo-Aryans, it is plain that their religion and habits differed materially from those of Hindus in modern or even in early historical times. The detestation of cow-slaughter and the loathing for beef, which are to-day the most prominent outward marks of Hinduism, have been so for many centuries, perhaps for something like two thousand years. The Indo-Aryans had not those marks. It is quite certain that they freely sacrificed bulls and cows and ate both beef and horse flesh on ceremonial occasions. Nevertheless, it is true that the roots of Hinduism go down into the *Rigvedic* age. The pantheon, that is to say, the gods viewed collectively, although widely different from that of Hinduism, contains the germs of later Hindu developments. Even now the Vedic deities are not wholly without honour, and in southern India the Nambudri Brahmans<sup>1</sup> of Malabar devote their lives to keeping up Vedic ritual as they understand it. The predominance of the Brahman had already begun when the *Rigveda* was composed, and the foundations of the caste system had thus been laid. The *Yajurveda* helps to bridge the gap between the *Rigveda* and Hinduism. It refers to the country between the Sutlaj and the Jumna, not to the Indus basin. The god Siva is introduced under that name, while Vishnu is more prominent than in the earlier work. The old nature worship has dropped into the background, and a much more mechanical form of religion, depending on elaborate ceremonies and highly skilled priests, is described.

**Vedic political history.** The hymns of the *Rigveda* contain abundant material for political history in the shape of names of kings, kingdoms, and tribes. They even describe battles and other incidents. The references occur in a manner so natural and incidental that in all probability they record a genuine tradition and are concerned with real events. But the utter impossibility of determining an even approximate chronology for either the hymns or the events mentioned in them renders the information almost valueless for historical purposes. The attempts made to connect the Vedic names with Hindu history by means of the long genealogies preserved in the *Purānas* and other works have failed to yield tangible results. Bharata, Sudās, Janamejaya, and other kings named in the hymns, although they may be accepted as real persons, cannot be invested with much interest from the historian's point of view.

**Historical geography.** The study of the geographical data in the hymns is more fruitful, and throws a certain amount of light on the course of the Indo-Aryan migration and the origins of

<sup>1</sup> The name is also written Nambutiri or Nāmburi.

Hinduism. In fact, the accepted belief in the Indo-Aryan immigration from Central Asia depends largely on the interpretation of the geographical allusions in the *Rigveda* and *Yajurveda*. Direct testimony to the assumed fact is lacking, and no tradition of an early home beyond the frontier survives in India. The amount of geographical knowledge implied in the literature is considerable. Such knowledge in those ancient days could have been acquired only by actual travelling. The hymn 'In Praise of the Rivers (*Nadi-stuti*)' in the tenth book (x. 75) is specially interesting as a display of geographical information. The author, while devoting his skill chiefly to the praises of the Sindhu or Indus, enumerates at least nineteen rivers, including the Ganges.

The fifth stanza, which gives a list of ten streams, small and great, in order from east to west, is remarkable :

Attend to this my song of praise, O Gangā,  
Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Sutudrī, Parushnī;  
Together with Asiknī, O Marudvridhā, and with  
Vitastā, O Ārjikiyā, listen with Sushomā.

The names of the Ganges, Jumna, and Sarasvatī remain unchanged. The Sutudrī is the modern Sutlaj, although its course has been greatly altered. The Parushnī is supposed to be the Rāvi. The Asiknī and Vitastā undoubtedly mean respectively the Akesines or Chināb, and the Vyath or Jhelum. The Marudvridhā is the Maruwārdwan, which flows from north to south through the Maru valley of the Kashmir-Jamū State, and joins the Chināb on its northern bank at Kashtwār. The Sushomā is the Sohān in the Rāwalpindi District, and the Ārjikiyā probably is the Kanshi in the same district.

The mention of the Marudvridhā is surprising, and it is difficult to understand how a stream of so little importance, hidden away among high mountains in an almost inaccessible valley, can have come to the knowledge of the author. The list suggests matter for curious speculation.<sup>1</sup>

**River changes.** It is of much importance, as already observed, that careful students of early Indian history and interpreters of the Vedas or other ancient records should bear in mind the fact that the snow-fed rivers of northern India have undergone immense changes even within historical times. The entire Indus system has been subject to tremendous transformations both in the mountains and in the plains. Earthquakes, elevations, subsidences, and landslips have affected the upper courses of the rivers, while the changes in the soft alluvium of the plains have occurred frequently on a gigantic scale and are still in progress. Some rivers, notably the Hakra or Wahindah, which once formed the boundary between Sind and Hind, have ceased to exist. Others, like the Kurram in the west and the Sarasvatī in the east, which

<sup>1</sup> See Max Müller, *India, What can it Teach us* (1883), pp. 163-75; Stein in *J. R. A. S.*, 1917, p. 91; and the translations by Griffith and others. I think the Ārjikiyā must be the Kanshi, and not as Stein suggests.



once were violent and impetuous, have dwindled into feeble, inconsiderable streams. The positions of the confluences in both the Indus and the Gangetic systems have shifted many miles. The existing delta of the Indus has been formed since the time of Alexander the Great. The whole group of rivers connected with or related to the Sutlaj has been completely transformed more than once. The Sutlaj itself has wandered over a bed eighty-five miles in width. Illustrations of the subject might be adduced in endless detail. What has been said may suffice to inspire caution in the interpretation of ancient texts and in attempts to identify places mentioned in those texts.<sup>1</sup>

**Vedāngas and Upavedas.** Two supplementary sections of the vast Vedic literature which are known as Vedāngas ('members of the Veda') and Upavedas ('subsidiary Vedas') may be briefly mentioned.

The Vedāngas comprise six groups of treatises written in the *sūtra* style on subjects more or less closely connected with ritual or the preservation of the Vedic texts. The subjects are: (1) phonetics or pronunciation (*sikshā*); (2) metre (*chhandas*); (3) grammar (*vyākaraṇa*); (4) etymology (*nirukṭi* or *nirukta*); (5) religious practice (*kalpa*); and (6) astronomy, or rather astrology (*jyotiṣa*).

The Upavedas treat of more distinctly secular subjects, namely: (1) medicine (*Āyurveda*); (2) war, or literally 'archery' (*Dhanurveda*); (3) music (*Gandharvaveda*); and (4) architecture and art (*Arthasāstra*).<sup>2</sup>

**Vedānta.** The term Vedānta ('end of the Veda') is now commonly applied to the philosophy taught in most of the Upanishads. So used it is interpreted to mean the 'final goal of the Veda'. In practice many people when speaking of the Vedas mean the Upanishads, and by them the Vedānta is regarded as 'the ultimate bound of knowledge'. In a more literal sense the term means the treatises, namely, the Upanishads, appended to the end of the Brāhmanas. The concise phrase *tat tvam asi*, 'that art thou', is accepted as summing up the ontology of the Vedānta.

**The epics.** When passing from the Vedic lyrics to the Sanskrit epics we enter a new world. Not only are the grammar, vocabulary,

<sup>1</sup> Students who desire to appreciate the force of the remarks in the text should read, mark, and digest Raverty's difficult memoir entitled 'The Mihrān of Sind and its Tributaries; a Geographical and Historical Study' in *J. A. S. B.*, vol. lxi, part 1, 1892. Unfortunately the copious matter is ill arranged, so that the treatise is exceptionally hard reading. It deals chiefly with the Indus, pp. 297-317; Hydaspes or Vitastā, pp. 318-30; Chināb, pp. 330-52; Rāvi, pp. 352-71; Biās, pp. 372-90; Sutlaj, pp. 391-418; Hakra, pp. 418-22 and 454-66. Discussion of results occupies pp. 469-508. I have learned much by repeated reading of the disquisition. For extensive changes in the rivers of the far south see *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, 1904, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Weber, *History of Indian Literature* (Trübner, 1882), pp. 271, 273. The term *Arthasāstra* has another meaning in Kautilya's work on statecraft.

metres, and style different, but the religion has been transformed and social conditions have been profoundly modified. Before those changes can be further considered it is necessary to explain briefly the character of the epics regarded as books.

Two huge poems or masses of verses, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, are commonly described as epics.

**The Rāmāyana.** The *Rāmāyana* deserves the name of epic because it is essentially a single long narrative poem composed by one author named Vālmīki, and is devoted to the celebration of the deeds of the hero Rāma with due regard to the rules of poesy. The work is in fact the first example of the Sanskrit *Kāvya* or artificially designed narrative poem. The simple, easily intelligible style, while free from the ingenuities and verbal gymnastics favoured by later authors, is by no means devoid of ornament. Five out of the seven books seem to constitute the epic as conceived by Vālmīki. Critics regard the first and last books as later additions. Episodes unconnected with the story are few. The grammar and language, which are remote from those of the Veda, closely approximate to those of 'classical' Sanskrit. The poem is known in three different recensions, the variations being due to the liberties taken by professional reciters. It is not possible to determine which form represents the original composed by Vālmīki, but the Bombay recension on the whole seems to preserve the oldest text. The text of narrative poems not being regarded as sacred like that of the Vedas, no obligation to preserve its purity was recognized. The seven books contain about 24,000 *ślokas*, or 48,000 lines.

**Theme of the Rāmāyana.** The main theme is the story of Prince Rāma, the son of King Dasaratha of Ayodhyā by Queen Kausalyā. The jealousy of Kaikeyī, the second queen, drove Rāma into exile and secured possession of the throne for her son, Bharata. Lakshmana, the third prince, voluntarily shared the exile of Rāma and Sītā his beloved wife. The adventures of the banished prince, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvana, the giant king of Lankā, the aid given to the prince by Hanumān, king of the monkeys, the vindication of Sītā from unjust aspersions on her chastity, and a thousand other incidents are even more familiar to Hindus in every part of India than the Bible stories are to the average European Christian. The story ends happily, and Rāma shares the kingdom with Bharata.

The heroic legend thus indicated has been edited by Brahmans so as to transform the poem into a book of devotion consecrated to the service of God in the form of Vishnu. Rāma, who is pictured as an incarnation of the deity, has thus become the man-god and saviour of mankind in the eyes of millions of devout worshippers, who have his name in the ejaculation, 'Rām, Rām', continually on their lips. He is venerated as the ideal man, while his wife, Sītā, is revered as the model of womanhood. Hindus unacquainted with Sanskrit bathe in 'the lake of the deeds of Rām' by the help of vernacular translations or imitations, among which

the most celebrated is the noble poem entitled the *Rām-charit mānas*, composed by Tulsī Dās in the days of Akbar. The moral teaching of the *Rāmāyana* in all its forms tends to edification, and the influence of Tulsī Dās in particular may be truly described as wholly on the side of goodness.

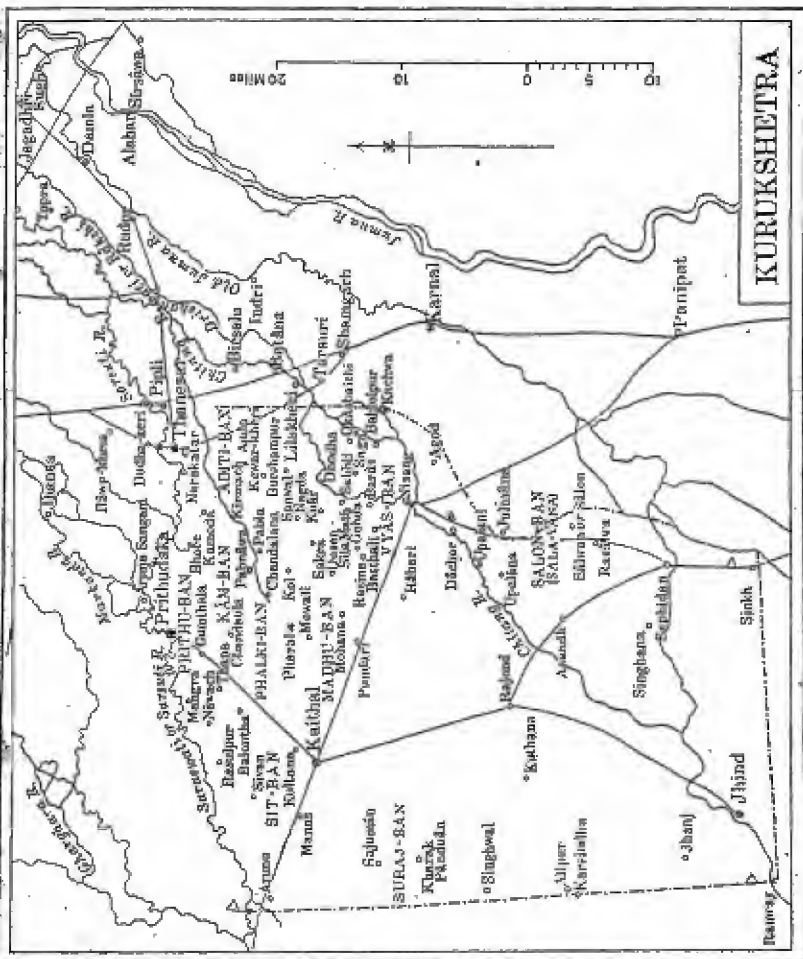
**The Mahābhārata.** The *Mahābhārata*, as we possess it in two recensions, a northern and a southern, cannot be designated correctly as an epic poem. It is a gigantic mass of compositions by diverse authors of various dates extending over many centuries, arranged in eighteen books or *parvans*, with a supplement called the *Harivamśa*, which may be reckoned as the nineteenth book. The number of *ślokas* exceeds 100,000, and the lines consequently are more than 200,000. The *Harivamśa* contains over 10,000 *ślokas*. The episodes, connected by the slightest possible bonds with the original narrative nucleus, constitute about four-fifths of the whole complex mass, which has the character of an 'encyclopaedia of moral teaching' as conceived by the Brahman mind.

**The epic portion.** The subject of the truly epic portion of the *Mahābhārata* is the Great War between the Kauravas, the hundred sons of Dhritarāshtra, led by Duryodhana, and the Pāndavas, the five sons of Pāndu, brother of Dhritarāshtra, led by Yudhishtira. The poet relates all the circumstances leading up to the war, and then narrates the tale of the fierce conflict which raged for eighteen days on the plain of Kurukshetra near Thānēsar, to the north of modern Delhi and the ancient Indraprastha.<sup>1</sup> All the nations and tribes of India from the Himālaya to the farthest south are represented as taking part in this combat of giants. The Pāndava host comprised the armies of the states situated in the countries equivalent to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Western Bihār, and Eastern Rājputāna, with contingents from Gujarāt in the west and from the Dravidian kingdoms of the extreme south. The Kaurava cause was upheld by the forces of Eastern Bihār, Bengal, the Himālaya, and the Panjāb. The battles ended in the utter destruction of nearly all the combatants on both sides, excepting Dhritarāshtra and the Pāndavas. But a reconciliation was effected between the few survivors, and Yudhishtira Pāndava was recognized as king of Hastināpur on the Ganges. Ultimately, the five sons of Pāndu, accompanied by Draupadī, the beloved wife of them all, and attended by a faithful dog, quitted their royal state, and journeying to Mount Meru were admitted into Indra's heaven.

The epic narrative, thus inadequately summarized, now occupies about 20,000 *ślokas*, but in its earliest form comprised only 8,800. That fact, which is clearly recorded, proves beyond doubt the unlimited rehandling which the *Mahābhārata* has undergone at the hands of professional reciters, poets of different ages, and Brahman editors. The mediæval Hindi epic, the *Chand-Raisa*, has been subjected to similar treatment and expanded from

<sup>1</sup> See map on p. 29. The caution that the rivers have changed immensely must be remembered. The map shows only the courses as in recent times.

5,000 to 125,000 verses. The original form of that poem is said to be still in existence.



**The Bhagavad-Gītā, &c.** The profound philosophical poem called the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which may be Englished as 'the Lord's Song', or in Edwin Arnold's phrase as 'the Song Celestial', divided into eighteen chapters or discourses, has been thrust into the sixth book of the *Mahābhārata*.

Other notable episodes, or inserted poems, are the charming tale of Nala and Damayanti, accessible in Milman's elegant English version; the story of Sakuntalā, forming the groundwork of Kālidāsa's play; and the legend of Sāvitrī, the Hindu Alcestris.

**Age of the epics.** The separate heroic and legendary tales imbedded in both the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* may in some cases go back to the most remote antiquity, but both of the epics in their existing form are far later than any of the Vedic hymns, and probably posterior to all the *Brahmanas*. The two epics, as Hopkins has proved in detail, are intimately related and include a large number of substantially identical verses. The language of both belongs essentially to the same period in the development of Sanskrit. Probably the greater part of the existing text of the *Mahābhārata* was complete by A.D. 200, but the work as a whole cannot be said to belong to any one era. The original work of Vālmiki, that is to say, Books II—VI of the *Rāmāyana*, is believed by Professor Macdonell to have been completed before the epic kernel of the *Mahābhārata* had assumed definite shape.

**The Rāmāyana not historical.** Most Hindus regard the epic narratives as statements of absolute historical facts, and would not be disturbed by sceptical criticism more than the ordinary unlearned Christian is by the so-called 'higher criticism' of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup> Foreign scholars, and even trained Indian scholars to a large extent, naturally look upon the poets' tales in a different light. Professors Jacobi and Macdonell, for instance, regard the *Rāmāyana* as being neither historical nor allegorical, but a poetic creation based on mythology. That interpretation sees in Sītā ('the furrow') an earth-goddess, and in Rāma an equivalent of Indra. Such speculations may or may not be accepted, but I feel fairly certain that the *Rāmāyana* does not hand down much genuine historical tradition of real events, either at Ayodhyā or in the peninsula. The poem seems to me to be essentially a work of imagination, probably founded on vague traditions of the kingdom of Kosala and its capital Ayodhyā. Dasaratha, Rāma, and the rest may or may not be the names of real kings of Kosala, as recorded in the long genealogy of the solar line given in the *Purānas*. But the investigation of the genealogies, on which a distinguished scholar has lavished infinite pains, is inconclusive, and the story of the epic is so interwoven with mythological fiction that it is impossible to disentangle the authentic history. The attempts to fix an approximately definite date for the adventures of Rāma rest on a series of guesses and are altogether unconvincing to my mind.

**The Great War.** The traditional belief that the Great War of the *Mahābhārata* actually was fought in the year 3102 B.C., the era of Yudhishtira, is strongly held. Although that date will hardly bear criticism, most people seem to be agreed that the poet of the original epic based his tale on the genuine tradition

<sup>1</sup> 'According to the Hindu notion the stories which are called mythology by Europeans are nothing short of history' (Ketkar, II. 477).

of a real Great War, just as the author of the *Iliad* had his imagination guided by dim recollections of an actual siege of Troy. The story, however, has been so much edited and moralized by different hands at times widely apart that little genuine tradition can be left. Persistent local memory undoubtedly has always recognized the sites of Hastināpura on the Ganges, the original Kaurava capital, and of Indraprastha on the Jumna, the newer town founded by the Pāndavas. But nothing visible exists at either site to confirm the popular belief. Hastināpura is supposed to be marked by a small hamlet of the same name on the high bank of the Ganges in the Meerut District, and the absence of remains is explained by the theory that the ancient town has been washed away by the Ganges. Every tourist is familiar with the fact that the walled village of Indarpat, situated near the bank of the Jumna between Shāhjahān's Delhi and Humāyūn's tomb, is pointed out as occupying part of the site of Indraprastha. The Nigambōdh Ghāt, or river stairs, and the Nīlchatri temple farther north, near Salimgarh, are believed to have been included in the ancient city, the northern limit of which is supposed to have extended to 'the north-eastern end of the street called Dariba—almost in the heart of the modern city'.<sup>1</sup> As at Hastināpur, no ancient remains of any sort have been found to support the identification of the site. The traditions fixing the positions of the two towns, however, may be accepted, and we may believe that a famous local war between the chiefs of Indraprastha and Hastināpura, supported severally by many tribes of northern India, occurred at a very remote date. Beyond that it is difficult to go. The reasons for believing that the Pāndavas were, as Hopkins suggests, 'a new people from without the pale', and for discrediting the alleged relationship between them and the Kauravas, are strong and cut at the root of the whole story. If the Pāndavas were non-Aryan hill-men, which in my judgement is probable, the poets and editors have transformed the story of their doings to such an extent that nothing truly historical is left.

The allegation that the chiefs of all India, including even the Pāndyas from the extreme south of the peninsula, took part in the fray is absolutely incredible.<sup>2</sup> Whether the date of the battle be placed about 3000 B. C., as some people argue, or two thousand years later, as others prefer, it is impossible that at either period distant powers like the Pāndyas or the King of Assam (Prāgyotisha) should have been interested in the local quarrels between the Kauravas and Pāndavas, which directly concerned only a small area in the neighbourhood of the city now called Delhi. The entire framework of the story is essentially incredible and

<sup>1</sup> Carr Stephen, *Archæology and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, Lūdiāna and Calcutta, 1876, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the 'catalogue of ships' interpolated in the *Iliad*. As all Greece desired to be credited with a share in the Trojan war after it had been made famous by Homer, so all India claimed places in the Great War of the *Mahābhārata*.

unhistorical. It may be that the royal genealogies for ages before and after the Great War, as recorded in the *Purāṇas* at length and in the epics less fully, are not wholly fictitious. But even if it be admitted that the lists often give the names in the proper order with approximate correctness, and indicate the existence of certain real relations friendly or hostile between the princes of certain dynasties, we are still a long way from finding intelligible history. The attempt to construct a rationalized narrative out of the materials available rests on a series of assumptions and guesses which can never lead to conclusions of much value. I confess my inability to extract anything deserving the name of political history from the epic tales of either the *Rāmāyana* or the *Mahābhārata*.

**Social conditions.** Both poems describe much the same state of society; but that proposition is subject to the qualification that certain parts of the *Mahābhārata* retain distinct traces of early practices, such as cow-killing and human sacrifice, which were regarded with horror when the later parts of the work were composed.<sup>1</sup> Other features are clearly non-Aryan, notably the polyandry of the Pāṇdavas, who all shared the one wife, Draupadī, after the manner of the Tibetans and certain other Himalayan tribes in the present day. The name Pāṇdava means 'pale-face', and the conjecture seems to be legitimate that the sons of Pāṇdu may have been the representatives of a yellow-tinted, Himalayan, non-Aryan tribe, which practised polyandry. That hypothesis involves the further inference (which may be supported for other reasons) that the alleged relationship between the Pāṇdavas and the Kauravas was an invention of the Brahman editors who undertook to moralize the old tales and bring them all into the Aryan fold. The subject is too speculative for further discussion in this place.

When the epics were finally recast in their present shape, be the date A. D. 200 or another, the doctrine of *ahimsā*, or non-injury to living creatures, had gained the upper hand. It is taught emphatically in many passages, although others, as observed above, retain memories of older practices.

The Vedic nature-worship had been mostly superseded by the cult of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva. New gods and goddesses unknown to the Veda, such as Gaṇeśa and Pārvatī, had arisen; and the Vedic deities had been reduced to a subordinate position, except Indra, who still retained high rank as the king of the heaven which warriors hoped to attain. The doctrine of rebirth, often loosely called transmigration of souls, had become generally accepted, and the belief in the incarnations of Vishnu had been formulated. The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, of which the date is quite uncertain, presents the Supreme Deity incarnate in the guise of the charioteer Krishna, who expounds the religion of duty, subject to the limitations of the four orders or *varṇas*, in 'plain but noble language'. The tribal organization of the State is much less

<sup>1</sup> For details and references see Vidya, p. 118, and Hopkins, p. 278.



prominent than it was in the Vedic period, and territorial kingdoms had arisen. The life of the court of Ayodhyā as depicted in the *Rāmāyana* is much the same as that of any old-fashioned Hindu state in recent times. Caste was already an ancient institution, and it may be said with confidence that the atmosphere of the epic world is that of familiar Hinduism, with certain exceptions indicated above, which occur chiefly in the *Mahābhārata*. The kingdoms mentioned were numerous and comparatively small. No hint seems to be given that a great paramount power existed. But it is not safe to affirm that the political and social conditions depicted in the epics are those of any one definite age. Both works as literary compositions may be roughly placed between 400 B.C. and A.D. 200. The *Rāmāyana* in its original form may have been composed by Vālmīki in the earlier half of the six centuries thus indicated, and it seems probable that the redaction of the *Mahābhārata* to something like its present shape took place in the later half of the same period. But determination of the dates of composition of the poems, if it could be effected, would not throw any light on the historical place of Rāma, Arjuna, and the other epic heroes. They are, I think, the creatures of imagination, guided more or less by dim traditions of half-forgotten stirring events which happened 'once upon a time', but cannot be treated as ascertained facts which came into existence at any particular period. The Indian epic heroes, in short, seem to me to occupy a position like that of the Knights of the Round Table in British legend, and it is as futile to attempt the distillation of matter-of-fact history, whether political or social, from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* as it would be to reconstruct the early history of Britain from the *Morte d'Arthur* or from its modern version, the *Idylls of the King*.

**The Purānas.** The nature of the works called *Purānas* which have been referred to demands brief explanation. The *Purānas* commonly recognized in the north of India are eighteen in number. Others, about which little is known to European scholars, are used in the south. A *Purāna*, according to the Indian definition, best exemplified by the *Vishnu Purāna*, should treat of five subjects, namely, primary creation, secondary creation, genealogies of gods and patriarchs, reigns of various Manus, and the history of ancient dynasties. The treatises consequently are bulky and crowded with legendary matter of various kinds. They have been well described by Bühler as 'popular sectarian compilations of mythology, philosophy, history, and the sacred law; intended, as they are now used, for the instruction of the unlettered classes, including the upper divisions of the Sūdra varṇa'.<sup>1</sup> Much of the contents comes down from remote antiquity, as the name *Purāna*, meaning 'old', testifies, but the books as they stand are of various dates. The *Vāyu Purāna*, one of the oldest, finally edited perhaps in the fourth century after Christ, is closely connected with the supplement to the *Mahābhārata* entitled the *Harivamśa*, already

<sup>1</sup> *Laws of Manu*, S.B.E., xxv, p. xci.



mentioned. The Puranic genealogies of kings in prehistoric times, as intimated above, seem to be of doubtful value, but those of the historical period or Kali Age, from about 600 B.C., are records of high importance and extremely helpful in the laborious task of reconstructing the early political history of India. Each of the *Purāṇas* is more or less specially consecrated to the service of a particular form of the godhead.

**Caste.** The existing institution of caste is peculiar to India, is at least three thousand years old, is 'the most vital principle of Hinduism', dominating Indian social life, manners, morals, and thought; and is founded on the intellectual and moral superiority of the Brahmans, which dates from Rigvedic times. It consists essentially in the division of Hindu mankind into about three thousand hereditary groups, each internally bound together by rules of ceremonial purity, and externally separated by the same rules from all other groups. Those propositions describing the institution of caste as it exists to-day in general terms are as accurate as any brief abstract description of an institution so complex can be.

**Definition of a caste.** A caste may be defined as a group of families internally united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matters of diet and marriage. The same rules serve to fence it off from all the other groups, each of which has its own set of rules. Admission to an established caste in long settled territory can be obtained nowadays by birth only, and transitions from one caste to another, which used to be feasible in ancient times, are no longer possible, except in frontier regions like Manipur. The families composing a caste may or may not have traditions of descent from a common ancestor, and, as a matter of fact, may or may not belong to one stock. Race, that is to say, descent by blood, has little concern with caste, in northern India, at all events, whatever may be the case in the south. The individual members of a caste may or may not be restricted to any particular occupation or occupations. The members may believe or disbelieve any creed or doctrine, religious or philosophical, without affecting their caste position. That can be forfeited only by breach of the caste regulations concerning the *dharma*, or practical duty of members belonging to the group. Each caste has its own *dharma*, in addition to the common rules of morality as accepted by Hindus generally, and considered to be the *dharma* of mankind. The general Hindu *dharma* exacts among other things reverence to Brahmans, respect for the sanctity of animal life in varying degrees, and especially veneration for horned cattle, pre-eminently the cow. Every caste man is expected to observe accurately the rules of his own group, and to refrain from doing violence to the feelings of other groups concerning their rules. The essential duty of the member of a caste is to follow the custom of his group, more particularly in relation to diet or marriage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Caste means a social exclusiveness with reference to diet and marriage. . . . Birth and rituals are secondary' (Shama Sastri, *The Evolution of Caste*, p. 18).

Violation of the rules on those subjects, if detected, usually involves unpleasant and costly social expiation and may result in expulsion from the caste, which means social ruin and grave inconvenience.

The Hindus have not any name for the caste institution, which seems to them part of the order of nature. It is almost impossible for a Hindu to regard himself otherwise than as a member of some particular caste, or species of Hindu mankind. Everybody else who disregards Hindu *dharma* is an 'outer barbarian' (*mleṭchha*) no matter how exalted his worldly rank or how vast his wealth may be. The proper Sanskrit and vernacular term for 'a caste' is *jāti* (*jāt*), 'species', although, as noted above, the members of a *jāti* are not necessarily descended from a common ancestor. Indeed, as a matter of fact, they are rarely, if ever, so descended. Their special caste rules make their community in effect a distinct species, whoever their ancestors may have been.

**The fiction of four original castes.** The common notion that there were four original castes, Brahman, Kshatriya or Rājanya, Vaisya, and Sūdra, is false. The ancient Hindu writers classified mankind under four *varnas* or 'orders', with reference to their occupations, namely: (1) the learned, literate, and priestly order, or Brahmans; (2) the fighting and governing classes, who were grouped together as Rājanyas or Kshatriyas, irrespective of race, meaning by that term ancestry; (3) the trading and agricultural people, or Vaisyas; and (4) common, humble folk, day labourers, and so forth, whose business it was to serve their betters. Every family and caste (*jāti*) observing Hindu *dharma* necessarily fell under one or other of those four heads. Various half-wild tribes, and also communities like sweepers, whose occupations are obviously unclean, were regarded as standing outside the four orders or *varnas*. Such unclean communities have usually imitated the Hindu caste organization and developed an elaborate system of castes of their own, which may be described by the paradoxical term 'outcaste castes'.

Nobody can understand the caste system until he has freed himself from the mistaken notion based on the current interpretation of the so-called *Institutes of Manu*, that there were 'four original castes'. No four original castes ever existed at any time or place, and at the present moment the terms Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sūdra have no exact meaning as a classification of existing castes. In northern India the names Vaisya and Sūdra are not used except in books or disputes about questions of caste precedence. In the south all Hindus who are not Brahmans fall under the denomination of Sūdra, while the designations Kshatriya and Vaisya are practically unknown.<sup>1</sup>

**The Purusha-sukta hymn.** The famous *Purusha-sukta*

<sup>1</sup> According to the Census of 1901 for the Madras Presidency the figures are: Brahman, 3.4 per cent.; Sūdra, 94.3 = 97.7 per cent. The small residuum is made up of a few Telingas and Kanarese who called themselves Kshatriyas or Vaisyas (Richards, *The Dravidian Problem*, p. 31).

hymn included in the latest book of the *Rigveda* (x, 90), and commonly supposed to be 'the only passage in the Veda which enumerates the four castes', has nothing to do with caste. The hymn has for its subject a cosmogony or theory of creation. The poet tries to picture creation as the result of immolating and cutting up Purusha, that is to say 'embodied spirit, or Man personified and regarded as the soul and original source of the universe, the personal and life-giving principle in all animated beings'. The Vedas, horses, cattle, goats, and sheep, the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame are depicted as being products of that 'great general sacrifice'. The poet proceeds next to expound the creation of the human race, and finally, of the sun, moon, and elements. I quote Colebrooke's version because it is free from the effect of the prepossession of other translators, who, under the influence of Manu and his followers, have assumed the reality of a reference to the supposed 'four original castes'.

'10. Into how many portions did they divide this being whom they immolated? what did his mouth become? what are his arms, his thighs, and his feet now called?

11. His mouth became a priest [*Brāhmaṇa*]; his arm was made a soldier [*Rājanya*]; his thigh was transformed into a husbandman [*Vaiśya*]; from his feet sprang the servile man (*Sūdra*).

12. The moon was produced from his mind; the sun sprung from his eye; air and breath proceeded from his ear; and fire rose from his mouth.

13. The subtle element was produced from his navel; the sky from his head; the earth from his feet; and space from his ear; thus did he frame worlds.'

The general drift of the whole passage is plain enough. The verses give a highly figurative, imaginative theory of creation. Both the Brahman and fire come from Purusha's mouth, just as the servile man or Sūdra and earth both proceed from his feet. No suggestion of the existence of caste groups is made. Mankind is simply and roughly classified under four heads according to occupation, the more honourable professions being naturally assigned the more honourable symbolical origin. It is absurd to treat the symbolical language of the poem as a narrative of supposed facts.

**Distinctions between varna and jāti.** Most of the misunderstanding on the subject has arisen from the persistent mistranslation of Manu's term *varṇa* as 'caste', whereas it should be rendered 'class' or 'order', or by some equivalent term.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, 1873, vol. i, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> 'The words Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras were names of classes rather than of castes during the pre-Buddhist period' (Shama Sastri, p. 18). '*Varna*, once a common name of all classes, perhaps taken from the colour of the garments that differed with different classes, as for example, white for the Brāhmins, red for the Kshatriyas, yellow for the Vaisyas, and black for the Sūdras, came to mean a caste in post-Buddhist literature' (*ibid.*, p. 44).

The compiler of the *Institutes of Manu* was well aware of the distinction between *varna* and *jāti*. While he mentions about fifty different castes, he lays much stress on the fact that there were only four *varnas*. The two terms are carelessly confused in one passage (x, 31), but in that only. Separate castes existed from an early date. Their relations to one another remain unaffected whether they are grouped theoretically under four occupational headings or not.

**Enormous number of existing castes.** My statement that three thousand distinct castes, more or less, exist at the present day is made on the authority of an estimate by Ketkar. Whether the number be taken as 2,000, 3,000, or 4,000 is immaterial, because the figure certainly is of that order. Many reasons, which it would be tedious to specify, forbid the preparation of an exact list of castes. One of those reasons is that new castes have been and still are formed from time to time. But the intricacies of the caste system in its actual working must be studied in the numerous special treatises devoted to the subject, which it is impossible to discuss in this work.

**Antiquity of the institution.** The assertion made on an earlier page that the institution in some of its essential features is at least three thousand years old probably errs on the side of caution. We know that caste existed before 800 B.C., because the most obvious features of the institution are noticed by the Greek authors of ascertained date; and it is reasonable to believe that castes, separated from one another by rules of ceremonial purity, as they now are, were in existence at least six or seven centuries earlier. I do not find any indication of the existence of caste in Rigvedic times. But the pre-eminence of the 'Brahman sacrificers', which was well assured even in that remote age, is the foundation of the later caste system. The people of the *Rigveda* had not yet become Hindus.

The learned, priestly, and intellectually superior class of the Indo-Aryans who were called Brahmins gradually framed extremely strict rules to guard their own ceremonial purity against defilement through unholy food or undesirable marriages. The enforcement of such rules on themselves by the most respected members of the Indo-Aryan community naturally attracted the admiration of the more worldly classes of society, who sought to emulate and imitate the virtuous self-restraint of the Brahmins. It being clearly impossible that ordinary soldiers, business men, peasants, and servants could afford to be as scrupulous as saintly, or at least professedly religious Brahmins, a separate standard of *dharma* for each section of society necessarily grew up by degrees. Kings, for instance, might properly and must do things which subjects could not do without sin, and so on. The long-continued conflict with the aboriginal Indians, who held quite different ideals of conduct, made both the Brahmins and their imitators more and more eager to assert their superiority and exclusiveness by ever-increasing scrupulosity concerning both diet and marriage.

**The evolution of caste.** The geographical isolation of interior India favoured the evolution of a distinct and peculiar social system. A student of the *Rigveda* texts, without knowledge of historical facts, might reasonably presume that the Indus basin where the immigrants first settled would have become the Holy Land of Hinduism. The Rishis never tire of singing the praises of the mighty Indus with its tributary streams. But the strange fact is that the basin of the Indus, and even the Panjāb beyond the Sutlaj, came to be regarded as impure lands by the Brahmans of interior India at quite an early date.<sup>1</sup> Orthodox Hindus are still unwilling to cross the Indus, and the whole Panjāb between that river and the Sutlaj is condemned as unholy ground, unfitted for the residence of strict votaries of *dharma*. The reason apparently is that the north-western territories continued to be overrun by successive swarms of foreigners from Central Asia, who disregarded Brahmans and followed their own customs. The inroads of those foreigners blotted out the memory of the Indo-Aryan immigration from the north-west, which is not traceable either in the popular Puranic literature or in the oral traditions of the people. To the east of the Sarasvatī and Sutlaj the Indo-Aryans were usually safe from foreign invasion and free to work out their own rule of life undisturbed. They proceeded to do so and thus to create Hinduism with its inseparable institution of caste. Internally the Indian territory was broken up into a multitude of small units, each of which had a tendency towards an exclusive, detached way of living.

**Effect of *ahimsā* on caste.** The sentiment in favour of respecting animal life, technically called the *ahimsā* doctrine, had a large share in fixing on the necks of the people burdensome rules of conduct. That sentiment, which is known to have been actively encouraged by Jain and Buddhist teachers from about 500 B. C., probably originated at a much earlier date. The propagation of *ahimsā* necessarily produced a sharp conflict of ideas and principles of conduct between the adherents of the doctrine and the old-fashioned people who clung to bloody sacrifices, cow-killing, and meat eating. Communities which had renounced the old practices and condemned them as revolting impieties naturally separated themselves from their more easy-going and self-indulgent neighbours, and formed castes bound strictly to maintain the novel code of ethics.<sup>2</sup> The *Mahabharata*, as already noted, contains many

<sup>1</sup> The combined testimony of the *Jātakas* and the Greek authors proves that in the fourth century B. C. Taxila in the north-western Panjāb still was a centre of Vedic learning. The change may have been due to the Indo-Scythian rule in the first two centuries A. C.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Shama Sastri, who believes the existing caste system to be of comparatively modern post-Buddhist origin, expresses his view of the effect of Jain and Buddhist teaching in language stronger than I am disposed to use :

“It is easy to perceive that if the Brahmans of the Gupta period ceased to continue to observe the long-established custom of marrying wives

inconsistent passages which indicate the transition from the ancient ideas to the new. The same conflict of ideals and practice still goes on, and may be observed in many localities of both southern and northern India. The first Rock Edict of Asoka, published about 256 B. C., enables us to fix one date in the long story and to mark an early instance of the change of attitude produced by Buddhist teaching.

'Formerly, in the kitchen of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King each day many [hundred] thousands of living creatures were slaughtered to make curries. But now, when this pious edict is being written, only three living creatures are slaughtered daily for curry, to wit, two peacocks and one antelope—the antelope, however, not invariably. Even those three living creatures henceforth shall not be slaughtered.'

Any person acquainted with modern India does not need to be told how the habit of flesh or fish eating separates certain castes from their vegetarian brethren.

**Effect of the Muhammadan conquest.** It is impossible to pursue the subject, which branches off into endless ramifications. One more observation may be recorded to the effect that the process of the Muhammadan conquest, from the time of Mahmūd of Ghaznī, tended to tighten the bonds of caste. The Hindus, unable on the whole to resist the Muslims in the field, defended themselves passively by the increased rigidity of caste association. The system of close caste brotherhoods undoubtedly protected Hindus and Hinduism during many centuries of Muslim rule. Modern Hinduism is incapable of accepting the old legal fiction that foreign outsiders should be regarded as fallen Kshatriyas. When the compiler of the *Laws of Manu* was writing it seemed quite natural to treat Persians, Dards, and certain other foreign nations as Kshatriyas who had sunk to the condition of Sūdras by reason of their neglect

from the three lower classes, it was not from any intention to preserve the purity of their blood, for it was already tainted and saturated with that of the other classes. It appears to be mainly an act of self-preservation against the charge of sexual intemperance brought by the Jaina and Buddhist monks. It is also easy to perceive that if they discontinued the immemorial custom of eating flesh and drinking liquor along with the employment of flesh-eating people as cooks in their households, it was not from any love of vegetarianism, but mainly from a determined effort to avoid the charges of intemperance and cruelty to animals brought against them by the Buddhists. Thus the passing of the Brāhmins from class life into caste life was . . . brought about against the will of the Brāhmins themselves; for it demands a good deal of self-denial to give up the pleasures of the bed and the table.

As a compensation for this self-denial, the reformed or reforming Brāhmins apparently perceived a decided advantage accruing to themselves; for that reform moved a death-blow to the existence of Buddhism itself. . . . Thus, with the introduction of flesh and liquor as articles of diet not condemned for the common people, the Vaisyas and Sūdras seem to have formed themselves into separate castes, following the Brāhmins' (p. 11). Those propositions seem to me to be only slightly exaggerated expressions of important truths.

of sacred rites and their failure to consult Brahmans (x, 44). The change in the Hindu attitude towards foreigners seems to be mainly due to the Muhammadan conquest. We may take it that from the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era the caste institution has subsisted in substantially its modern form. That proposition is subject to the qualification that minor local and superficial modifications are taking place continually. But the institution as a whole remains unchanged and unshaken.

**Demerits of caste.** The demerits of the peculiar Hindu institution are obvious. Anybody can perceive that it shuts off Indians from free association with foreigners, thus making it difficult for the Indian to understand the foreigner, and for the stranger to understand the Indian. It is easier for the English administrator to attain full sympathy with the casteless Burman than it is for him to draw aside the veil which hides the inmost thoughts of the Chitpāwan or Nambudri Brahman. No small part of the mystery which ordinarily confines interest in Indian subjects to a narrow circle of experts is due ultimately to caste. It is not pleasant for an Englishman or Frenchman to know that, however distinguished he may be personally, the touch of his hand is regarded as a pollution by his high-caste acquaintance. Yet that is the disagreeable fact. Within India caste breaks up society into thousands of separate units, frequently hostile one to the other, and always jealous. The institution necessarily tends to hinder active hearty co-operation for any purpose, religious, political, or social. All reformers are conscious of the difficulties thus placed in their path. Each individual finds his personal liberty of action checked in hundreds of ways unknown to the dwellers in other lands. The restrictions of caste rules collide continually with the conditions of modern life, and are the source of endless inconveniences. The institution is a relic of the ancient past and does not readily adapt itself to the requirements of the twentieth century. Although necessity compels even the strictest Brahmans to make some concessions to practical convenience, as, for instance, in the matters of railway travelling and drinking pipe water, the modifications thus introduced are merely superficial. The innate antique sentiment of caste exclusiveness survives in full strength and is not weakened materially even by considerable laxity of practice. The conflict between caste regulations and modern civilization is incessant, but caste survives. Further, the institution fosters intense class pride, fatal to a feeling of brotherhood between man and man. The Malabar Brahman who considers himself defiled if an outcaste stands within twenty paces of him cannot possibly be interested in a creature so despised. The sentiment pervades all classes of Hindu society in varying degrees of intensity. Such objections to the caste institution, with many others which might be advanced, go far to justify, or at any rate explain, the vigorous denunciations of the system found abundantly in Indian literature as well as in the writings of foreigners. Four stanzas



by Vemana, the Telugu poet, may serve as a summary of the numerous Indian diatribes on the subject.

## CASTE

If we look through all the earth,  
Men, we see, have equal birth,  
Made in one great brotherhood,  
Equal in the sight of God.  
Food or caste or place of birth  
Cannot alter human worth.  
Why let caste be so supreme ?  
'Tis but folly's passing stream. . . .  
Empty is a caste-dispute :  
All the castes have but one root,  
Who on earth can e'er decide  
Whom to praise and whom deride ?  
Why should we the Pariah scorn,  
When his flesh and blood were born  
Like to ours ? What caste is He  
Who doth dwell in all we see ?<sup>1</sup>

The dictum of Sir Henry Maine, the eminent jurist, that caste is 'the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions' may suffice as a sample of adverse opinions expressed by European writers.

**The merits of caste.** The hostile critics have not got hold of the whole truth. Much may be said on the other side, which needs to be presented. An institution which has lasted for thousands of years, and has forced its passage down through the peninsula all the way to Cape Comorin in the face of the strongest opposition, must have merits to justify its existence and universal prevalence within the limits of India.<sup>2</sup> The most ardent defenders of caste, of course, must admit its unsuitability for other lands. 'Thinking men', as Sir Madhava Row observed, 'must beware lest the vast and elaborate social structure which has arisen in the course of thousands of years of valuable experience should be injured or destroyed without anything to substitute, or with a far worse structure to replace it.' The institution of caste cannot be treated properly as a thing by itself. It is an integral part of Hinduism, that is to say, of the Hindu social and economic system. It is, as Ketkar justly observes, intimately associated with the Hindu philosophical ideas of *karma*, rebirth, and the theory of the three *gunas*. But such abstract ideas cannot be discussed in this place. More writers than one have observed that the chief attribute of the caste

<sup>1</sup> Gover, *The Folk-songs of Southern India*, London, Trübner, 1872, p. 275 ; a charming and instructive book.

<sup>2</sup> The hatred which existed between the early Dravidians and the Aryans is best preserved in the Kuricchans' (a hill tribe in Malabar, corresponding to the Kuravas of the Tamil country) custom of plastering their huts with cow-dung to remove the pollution caused by the entrance of a Brahman' (*Tamil Studies*, p. 90). The Kuravas in Travancore rank very low and bury their dead (*The Travancore State Manual*, ii. 402).



system regarded historically is its stability. The Hindu mind clings to custom, and caste rules are solidified custom. That stability, although not absolute, has been the main agent in preserving Hindu ideas of religion, morals, art, and craftsmanship. The Abbé Dubois was much impressed by the services which the institution renders to social order. Monier Williams concisely observes that 'caste has been useful in promoting self-sacrifice, in securing subordination of the individual to an organized body, in restraining vice, [and] in preventing pauperism'. Similar quotations might be largely multiplied.<sup>1</sup>

**The future of caste.** With reference to the future, the practical conclusion is that talk about the abolition or even the automatic extinction of caste is futile. Caste within India cannot be either abolished or extinguished within a measurable time. The system grew up of itself in remote antiquity because it suited India, and will last for untold centuries because it still suits India on the whole, in spite of its many inconveniences. Hindu society without caste is inconceivable. Reformers must be content to make the best of a system which cannot be destroyed. The absolutely indispensable compromises with modern conditions will arrange themselves from time to time, while the huge mass of the Indian agricultural population will continue to walk in the ancestral ways. The deep waters of Hinduism are not easily stirred. Ripples on the surface leave the depths unmoved.

**The 'Laws of Manu'.** In connexion with the subject of the evolution of caste, the famous law-book commonly called the 'Laws', or 'Code', or 'Institutes of Manu' (*Mānava-dharma-sāstra* in Sanskrit) demands notice. The treatise, written in lucid Sanskrit verse of the 'classical' type, comprises 2,684 couplets (*śloka*) arranged in twelve chapters; and is the earliest of the metrical law-books. It professes to be the composition of a sage named Bhrigu, who used the works of predecessors. The date of composition may lie between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. About one-tenth of the verses is found in the *Mahābhārata*.

The *Laws of Manu* form the foundation of the queer medley of inconsistent systems of jurisprudence administered by the Privy Council and the High Courts of India under the name of Hindu Law. The prevalent error concerning the supposed 'four original castes' rests partly, as proved above, on erroneous interpretation of the text, and partly on fictitious explanations of the facts of caste offered by the author. The early Sanskritists unduly exalted the authority of the *Laws of Manu*, which they regarded as veritable laws instead of the mere rulings of a text-book writer, which they actually are. The fuller knowledge of the present day sees the book in truer perspective, but the old errors still exert a baneful influence in many directions.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the quotations are taken from Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, 1906, vol. II, pp. 229 foll.

The books named are merely those which the author has found most useful.

The first place is due to Prof. A. A. MACDONELL, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Heinemann, 1900), a masterly summary of an enormous subject. KABOT, *The Rigveda*, transl. by ARROWSMITH (Boston, 1886), is a good small book. The metrical version of *The Hymns of the Rigveda* by GRIFFITH (2 vols., 2nd ed., Benares, 1887) is an unpretentious work of sound scholarship. The literal translation of the *Atharva Veda* by WHITNEY AND LANMAN (2 vols., Harvard Or. Series, 1905) is indispensable, but difficult to understand. *The History of Sanskrit Literature* by WEBER (transl., 2nd ed., Trübner, 1882) is highly technical. MAX MÜLLER'S *Chips from a German Workshop* (vol. 1868), and *India, What can it Teach us?* (1883) are still of service. I have also derived benefit from COLERIDGE'S *Miscellaneous Essays* (collected ed. in 2 vols., Trübner, 1873); MANNING, *Ancient and Mediaeval India* (2 vols., 1869); and R. W. FRAZER, *A Literary History of India* (1898). RAJENDRALAL MITRA'S essays on 'Bee in Ancient India' and cognate topics, reprinted in *Indo-Aryans* (London and Calcutta, 1881), are sound and important. Mr. B. G. TILAK temperately expounds an extreme theory in *Orion, or Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas* (Poona, 1916).

For the Epic period, HOPKINS, *The Great Epic of India* (New York and London, 1901), is of high authority. *Epic India* by C. V. VAIDYA (Bombay, 1907), although a rather fanciful book, has some good points. Mr. F. E. PARGITER'S papers on early Indian history in the *J. R. A. S.* from 1908 present novel views. See also his *Dynasties of the Kali Age* (1913).

The most illuminating book on caste which I have met with is *The History of Caste in India* by SHRIDAR V. KETKAR (vol. i, Ithaca, N.Y., 1900; vol. ii, 'An Essay on Hinduism', Luzac, London, 1911). The book apparently is not known as well as it deserves to be. *The Evolution of Caste*, a pamphlet by R. SHAMA SASTRI (44 pp., S. P. C. K. Press, Madras, 1916), is a suggestive paper. A short essay entitled 'Caste in India' was published by me in *East and West* (Bombay, June 1913). 'Influence of the Indian King upon the growth of Caste' by H. J. MAYNARD (*J. P. H. S.*, vol. vi, pp. 88-100) is a novel and important essay.

Certain other writers are quoted in the notes, and a very long list of books might be given.

## CHAPTER 3

The pre-Maurya states; the rise of Jainism and Buddhism; the invasion of Alexander the Great; India in the fourth century B.C.

**Continuity of Indian civilization.** China excepted, no region of the world can boast of an ancient civilization so continuous and unbroken as that of India. Civilized life may have begun earlier in Egypt and Babylonia, but in those countries the chain connecting the distant past with the present was rudely snapped long ago. No living memory of the Chaldees and Pharaohs or of their institutions survives. In India the ideas of the Vedic period still are a vital force, and even the ritual of the Rishis is not wholly disused. The lack of ancient records inscribed on imperishable material, such as abound in Egypt and Babylonia, forbids the writing of early Indian history in a manner at all comparable with that

feasible in the countries named. The historian of India has nothing but tradition to guide him until quite a late period, and his handling of really ancient times is necessarily devoid of any chronological framework, being vague and sketchy.

**Dated history begins in seventh century B.C.** No attempt at Indian history dated even in the roughest fashion can be made before the seventh century B.C. The first exact date known, as already mentioned, is 326 B.C., the year of Alexander's invasion. By reckoning back from that fixed point, or from certain closely approximate Maurya dates slightly later, and by making use of the historical traditions recorded in literature, a little information can be gleaned concerning a few kingdoms of northern India in the seventh century. No definite affirmation of any kind can be made about specific events in either the peninsula or Bengal before 300 B.C. The scanty record of events in the northern kingdoms has to be mostly picked out of books written primarily to serve religious purposes. Those books, Jain, Buddhist, and Brahmanical, naturally deal chiefly with the countries in which religious movements were most active. The traditionary accounts are deeply tinged by the sectarian prejudices of the writers, and often hopelessly discordant.

**India in the seventh century B.C.** Recent excavations give reason for believing that a capital city occupied part of the site of Taxila in the Panjāb at a remote period, but at present it is not possible to say anything more definite about the history of that region. Other cities, too, both in the north and the south of India, seem to have been in existence from immemorial antiquity. In the seventh century B.C. we may be assured that although vast territories in most parts of India were still covered by forest, the home of wild beasts and scanty tribes of savage men, extensive civilized settlements of long standing existed in the plains of the Indus and Ganges basins.

Ujjain in Sindhia's dominions, still a considerable town retaining its ancient name unchanged, ranks as one of the seven sacred cities of India, and rivals Benares in its claims on Hindu veneration.<sup>1</sup> In the seventh century it was the capital of the kingdom of Avanti, known later as Mālwa, which evidently was one of the leading Indian powers for a considerable time until the supremacy passed into the hands of Magadha. Kosala, or Northern Oudh, of which the capital was Śrāvastī on the Rāptī, probably represented by Sahet-Mahet, was another important state which competed with Magadha for the headship of Aryāvarta.

**Magadha.** Magadha, or South Bihār, the seat of the Magadha tribe, rose to unquestioned pre-eminence in the fourth century B.C., and at a much earlier date had been intimately associated with the development of historical Jainism and Buddhism. The literary traditions of northern India consequently are mostly

<sup>1</sup> The seven sacred cities are Benares (Kāśī), Hardwār (Māyā), Kānchi (Conjeeveram), Ayodhyā (Oudh), Dvāravatī (Dvārikā), Mathurā, and Ujjain or Avantikā.

devoted to the affairs of Magadha, and the history of that state has to do duty as the history of India, because hardly anything is known about the annals of less prominent kingdoms.

**King Bimbisāra.** The regular story of Magadha begins with the Saisunāga Dynasty, established before 600 B. C., perhaps in 642 B. C., by a chieftain of Benares named Sisunāga (or Sisunāka), who fixed his capital at Girivraja or old Rājagriha, among the hills of the Gayā District.<sup>1</sup>

The first monarch about whom anything substantial has been recorded is the fifth king, Bimbisāra or Srēnika, who extended his paternal dominions by the conquest of Anga, the modern Bhāgalpur and Munger Districts. He built the town of New Rājagriha (Rājgir), and may be regarded as the founder of the greatness of Magadha. He appears to have been a Jain in religion, and sometimes is coupled by Jain tradition with Asoka's grandson, Samprati, as a notable patron of the creed of Mahāvira. His reign of twenty-eight years may be dated approximately from 582 to 554 B. C., according to the amended reckoning.

**Persian occupation of Indus valley.** During the period of his rule, according to one theory, or that of Darsaka, according to another, at a date subsequent to 516 B. C., Darius, son of Hystaspes, the capable autocrat of Persia (521-485 B. C.), dispatched an expedition commanded by Skylax of Karyanda in Karia with orders to prove the feasibility of a sea passage from the mouth of the Indus to Persia. Skylax equipped a fleet on the upper waters of the Panjāb rivers in the Gandhāra country, made his way down to the coast, and in the thirteenth month reached the sea. Darius was thus enabled to annex the Indus valley and to send his fleet into the Indian Ocean. The archers from India supplied a contingent to the army of Xerxes, the son of Darius, and shared the defeat of Mardonius at Plataea in Greece in 479 B. C.

The province on the Indus annexed by Darius was formed into the twentieth satrapy, which was considered to be the richest and most populous province of the Persian empire. It paid a tribute of 360 Euboic talents of gold-dust, equivalent to at least a million sterling, and constituting about one-third of the total bullion revenue of the Asiatic provinces. The Indian satrapy, which was distinct from Aria (Herat), Arachosia (Kandahār), and Gandharia (Taxila and the north-western frontier), must have extended from the Salt Range to the sea, and probably included part of the Panjāb to the east of the Indus. The courses of the rivers in those days were quite different from what they now are, and there is reason for believing that extensive tracts now desert were then rich and populous. The high tribute paid is thus explained.

No distinct evidence exists to show that there was any communication in the fifth century B. C. between the Persian province on the Indus and the growing kingdom of Magadha. But it would

<sup>1</sup> See Jackson, 'Notes on Old Rājagriha' (*Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, for 1913-14 (1917), pp. 265-71, Pl. lxxi.

be extremely rash to affirm that no such communication existed. It is not known at what date Persia ceased to exercise effective control over the twentieth satrapy. At the time of Alexander's invasion the Indus was still recognized as the official boundary between the Persian empire and India, but the authorities do not mention the presence of Persian officials along the course of the river, the banks of which were occupied by sundry small states with rulers of their own, and seemingly independent.

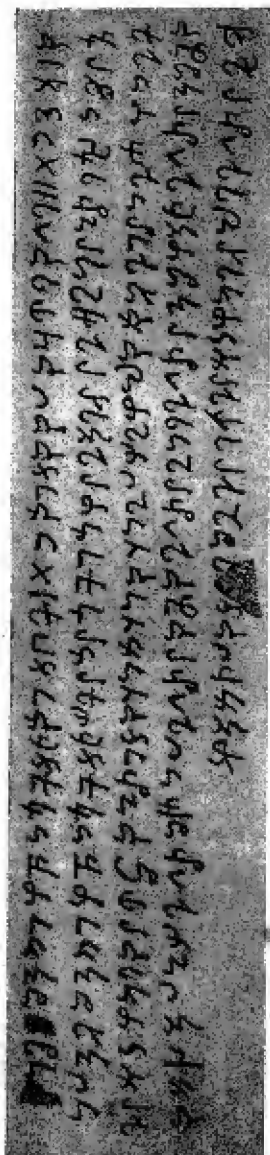
The Kharoshthi alphabet, derived from the Aramaic script, and written from right to left, which continued to be used on the north-western frontier until about the fourth century of the Christian era, appears to have been introduced by Persian officials and may be regarded as a memorial of the days when the Indus valley was part of the Achaemenian empire.

**King Ajātasatru.** Bimbisāra was succeeded in or about 554 B.C. by his son Ajātasatru or Kūnika, whose reign may be taken as having lasted for twenty-seven years. He built the fortress of Pātali on the Sōn, which afterwards developed into the imperial city of Pātaliputra. His mother was a lady of the famous Lichchhavi tribe, and he was married to a princess of Kosala. He waged successful wars against both the Lichchhavis and his consort's kingdom. Kosala disappears from history as an independent kingdom, and evidently was absorbed by Magadha.

**The Lichchhavis.** The Lichchhavi nation, tribe, or clan, which played a prominent part in Indian legend and history for more than a thousand years, claims a few words of notice.<sup>1</sup> The Lichchhavis dwelt in the land of the Vrijjis, the region now called the Muzaffarpur District of Bihār to the north of the Ganges. Their capital was Vaisāli, a noble city ten or twelve miles in circuit, represented by the villages and ruins at

<sup>1</sup> The spelling of the name varies.

KHAROSHTHI SCRIPT ON SILVER SCROLL.



or near Basārḥ, twenty miles to the north of Hājipur, and on the northern side of the river about twenty-seven miles distant in a direct line from Pāṭaliputra (Patna). The Lichchhavis were governed by an assembly of notables, presided over by an elected chief (*nāyaka*). Good reason exists for believing that they were hill-men of the Mongolian type akin to the Tibetans. They certainly followed the unpleasant Tibetan custom of exposing the bodies of the dead, which were sometimes hung upon trees, and their judicial procedure in criminal cases was exactly the same as the Tibetan. The first Tibetan king is said to have belonged to the family of Sākya the Lichchhavi, a kinsman of Gautama, the sage of another branch of the Sākya. The more I consider the evidence of such traditions and the unmistakable testimony of the early sculptures as at Barhut and Sanchī, dating from about 200 B.C., the more I am convinced that the Mongolian or hill-man element formed a large percentage in the population of northern India during the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era. I think it highly probable that Gautama Buddha, the sage of the Sākya, and the founder of historical Buddhism, was a Mongolian by birth, that is to say, a hill-man like a Gūrkhā with Mongolian features, and akin to the Tibetans. Similar views were expressed long ago by Beal and Fergusson, who used the terms Scythic or Turanian in the sense in which I use Mongolian.

The Lichchhavis retained an influential position for many centuries. The marriage of Chandragupta I with a Lichchhavi princess at the close of the third century A. C. laid the foundation of the greatness of the Imperial Gupta dynasty, and the tribe supplied a line of rulers in the Nepāl valley up to the seventh century.

In early times the Mallas of Pāwā and Kusinagara, who are often mentioned in Buddhist legends, probably were akin to the Lichchhavis.

Mahāvira, the founder of historical Jainism, likewise may have been a Mongolian hill-man. The Brahman writers regarded the Lichchhavis as degraded Kshatriyas, a purely fictitious mode of expression.

**Kings Darsaka and Udaya.** Ajātasatru was succeeded in or about 327 B. C. by his son Darsaka, who is mentioned in a play by the early dramatist Bhāsa, which came to light in 1910. He was followed about 508 by his son Udaya, who built the city of Kusumapura on the Ganges, a few miles from Pāṭaliputra on the Sōn. The two names are sometimes used as synonyms. The position of the confluence of the Sōn with the Ganges and the courses of both rivers in the neighbourhood of Pāṭaliputra have undergone extensive changes since the days of Udaya.

**Paricide story.** Buddhist tradition from various sources is unanimous in affirming that Ajātasatru, weary of awaiting the course of nature, murdered his father, and the crime is said to have been instigated by Devadatta, the heretical cousin of the Buddha. I used to accept the story of the paricide as historically true, but am now disposed to reject it as being the outcome of

*odium theologicum*, or sectarian rancour, which has done so much to falsify the history of ancient India. The Jains, representing Ajātasatru as a devout follower of their religion who 'ruled the country for eighty years according to the laws of his father', ignore and implicitly deny the accusation of parricide. The truth seems to be that Ajātasatru, like many later Indian sovereigns, did not confine his royal favour to any one sect. At different times he bestowed his bounty on the followers of the 'former Buddhas' led by Devadatta, on the adherents of Gautama's reformed Buddhism, and on the Jains. Both Buddhists and Jains claimed him as one of themselves. The Jain claim appears to be well founded. When the Buddhists had secured pre-eminence in northern India in consequence of Asoka's patronage, leanings towards Jainism became criminal in the eyes of ecclesiastical chroniclers, who were ready to invent the most scandalous stories in order to blacken the memory of persons deemed heretical. The legends told by orthodox Buddhists about Gautama's cousin Devadatta seem to have no other foundation. It will be shown presently that the history of the Nandas has been falsified in a similar fashion. For those reasons I now reject the Buddhist tale of Ajātasatru's murder of his father. According to the traditions of the Jains, their ancient temples in Magadha were destroyed by the Buddhists when they attained power.

**Kings and prophets.** The main interest of the reigns of Bimbisāra and his son lies in the close association of both kings with the lives of Gautama Buddha and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra Tirthankara, who are usually described respectively as the founders of Buddhism and Jainism. The traditions concerning the intercourse of the kings with the prophets are discrepant in many particulars which need not be discussed, but it seems to be fairly certain that King Bimbisāra was related to Mahāvīra, and was contemporary for some years with both him and Gautama Buddha.

Credible evidence affirms that Ajātasatru visited both of those teachers, and that during his reign Gautama Buddha died. In the third edition of *The Early History of India* (1914) I assumed that Gautama died in 487 B.C., in the reign of Ajātasatru, which began about 502 B.C. I refrained from defining the date of Mahāvīra's death. But, if the revised reading of the Khāravēla inscription is correctly interpreted (*post*, p. 58 n.), all the Sāisunāga dates must be moved back more than fifty years. The tentative chronology in the table on page 70 *post* has been revised accordingly. If it is at all correct, it supports the Ceylon date, 544 or 543 B.C., for the death of Gautama Buddha. But no hypothesis can reconcile all the conflicting testimonies and traditions.

**Religion in sixth century B.C.** The sixth century B.C. was a time when men's minds in several widely separated parts of the world were deeply stirred by the problems of religion and salvation. The Indian movement was specially active in Magadha and the neighbouring regions where the Hinduizing of the population was incomplete and distinctions of race were clearly marked. Intelli-



gent members of the governing classes, who were regarded as Kshatriyas by the Brahmans from the west, were inclined to consider themselves better men than their spiritual guides, whose arrogant class-pride aroused warm opposition. It seems to me almost certain, as already indicated, that the Saisunāgas, Lichchhavis, and several other ruling families or clans in or near Magadha were not Indo-Aryan by blood. They were, I think, hill-men of the Mongolian type, resembling the Tibetans, Gūrkhās, Bhūtiās, and other Himalayan tribes of the present day. The racial distinction between the Brahmans and their pupils necessarily evoked and encouraged the growth of independent views on philosophy and religion. The educated men of the upper classes, called Kshatriyas by the Brahmans, rebelled against the claim of the strangers to the exclusive possession of superior knowledge and the key of the door to salvation.

Many sects arose advocating the most diverse opinions concerning the nature of God and the soul, the relation between God and man, and the best way of attaining salvation. Most Indian thinkers contemplate salvation or deliverance (*moksha*) as meaning the release of the soul from all liability to future rebirths. At that time the religion favoured by the Brahmans, as depicted in the treatises called *Brāhmanas*, was of a mechanical, lifeless character, overlaid with cumbrous ceremonial. The formalities of the irksome ritual galled many persons, while the cruelty of the numerous bloody sacrifices was repugnant to others. People sought eagerly for some better path to the goal of salvation desired by all. Some, who hoped to win their object by means of transcendental knowledge, sounded the depths of novel systems of philosophy. Others sought to subdue the body and free the soul by inflicting on themselves the most austere mortifications and cruel self-tortures.

**Jainism and Buddhism.** All the numerous schools and sects which then sprang up or flourished died out in the course of time save two. The doctrines of the two surviving sects now known as Jainism and Buddhism have brought into existence two powerful churches or religious organizations which still affect profoundly the thoughts of mankind.

Buddhism, although almost extinct in the land of its birth, is at this day one of the greatest spiritual forces in the world, dominating, as it does in various forms, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Tibet, Mongolia, China, and Japan. Jainism, which never aspired to such wide conquests, now claims but a comparatively small number of adherents, resident chiefly in Rājputāna and western India. The influence of the religion, however, even now is much greater than that indicated by the census returns. In former times it pervaded almost every province of India and enjoyed the patronage of mighty kings.

Both Jainism and Buddhism as historical religions originated in Magadha or the territories adjoining that kingdom in the reigns of Bimbisāra and his son Ajātasatru. Those two faiths, it need



hardly be said, did not come into being independently of previous conditions. The teaching of Mahāvīra the Jain and of Gautama the Buddha was based on the doctrine of earlier prophets. Mahāvīra started his religious life as a reformer of an ancient ascetic order said to have been founded by Pārsvanāth two centuries and a half earlier. Gautama's preaching was related to the cult of the 'former Buddhas', whose prophet was Devadatta, Gautama's



MAHĀVĪRA VARDHAMĀNA.

cousin. But we need not trouble about the obscure precursors of Jainism and Buddhism, who may be left to the research of antiquarians. The history of India is concerned seriously only with those historical religions as started respectively by Mahāvīra and Gautama. Although the stories of the lives of both prophets are obscured by a veil of legend and mythology, certain facts seem to be established with sufficient certainty. We will take first Jainism, the minor and probably the older religion of the two.

**Career of Mahāvīra.** Vardhamāna, better known by his title in religion of Mahāvīra, was the son of a Licchhavi noble of Vaisālī. He gave up his honourable rank and joined the ascetic order of Pārsvanāth, in which he remained for some years. Becoming dissatisfied with the rules of that order, he started on his own account as a religious leader

when about forty years of age. During the remainder of his life, which lasted more than thirty years, he travelled as a preacher through Magadha or South Bihār; Videha, otherwise called Mithilā or Tirhūt; and Anga or Bhāgalpur. In the course of his ministry he organized a new religious order consisting of professed friars and nuns, lay brethren and lay sisters. When he died at Pāwā in the Patna District his adherents are said to have exceeded 14,000 in number. Being related through his mother to the reigning kings of Videha, Magadha, and Anga, he was in a position to gain official patronage for his teaching, and is recorded to have been in personal

touch with both Bimbisāra and Ajātasatru, who seem to have followed his doctrine. The traditional dates for his death vary so much that it is impossible to obtain certainty in the matter. The date most commonly accepted, 527 B.C., is difficult to reconcile with the well-attested fact of his interview with Ajātasatru and with the Khāravela inscription. Professor Jacobi advocates 477 B.C. as the approximate year of the decease of Mahāvīra.

**Career of Buddha.** The career of Gautama, the sage of the Sākyas (Sākyamuni), known generally as Buddha or the Buddha, because he claimed to have attained supreme knowledge of things spiritual (*bodhi*), was very similar to that of Mahāvīra. Gautama, like his rival prophet, was the son of a noble Sākya, the Rājā of Kapilavastu in the Nepalese Tārāi, a dependency of Kosala, and was classed by the Brahmans as a Kshatriya. The legends relate in endless imaginative detail the story of the young prince's disgust for the luxurious life of a palace, and of his resolve to effect the Great Renunciation. Leaving his home, he went to Gayā and there sought salvation by subjecting his body to the severest penances. But while sitting under the holy tree he made the discovery that mere asceticism was futile, and decided to spend the rest of his life in preaching the truth as he saw it. He proceeded to the Deer Park at Sārnāth near Benares, where five disciples joined him. From that small beginning arose the great Buddhist *Sangha* or Order. Gautama continued his preaching for forty-five years and died aged eighty at Kusinagara, which probably was situated in Nepalese territory at the junction of the Little Rāptī with the Gandak near Bhavēsar Ghāt. The well-known remains near Kasiā in the Gorakhpur District appear to be those of the monastic establishment of Vēthadīpa, subordinate to the head monastery at Kusinagara. Both were called *Parinirvāna*.



GAUTAMA BUDDHA.  
(Sārnāth, fifth century.)

monasteries as being connected with the death of Buddha.<sup>1</sup> The date of his decease, like that of Mahāvīra, cannot be determined with accuracy. I formerly accepted 487 or 486 B.C. as the best attested date, but the new reading of the Khāravēla record pushes back all the early dates. It appears that both Mahāvīra and Buddha were contemporary with kings Bimbisāra and Ajātasatru, both dying in the reign of the latter.

**Jainism and Buddhism contrasted.** The close parallelism of the careers of the two prophets, combined with certain superficial resemblances between the doctrines of the sects which they founded, induced some of the older scholars to regard Jainism as a sect of Buddhism. That opinion is now recognized to be erroneous. The two systems, whether regarded as philosophies or religions, are essentially different. The word 'sects' as applied above to the Jain and Buddhist churches is correctly used, because both Mahāvīra and Buddha may be justly regarded as having been originally Hindu reformers. Neither prophet endeavoured directly to overthrow the caste framework of Hindu society so far as it had been established in their time, although both rejected the authority of the Vedas and opposed the practice of animal sacrifice. Followers of either Mahāvīra or Gautama were not asked to give up their belief in the Hindu gods, which always have received veneration from both Jains and Buddhists. Indra, Brahmā, and other gods play a prominent part in Buddhist legend and belief. In Ceylon even the great gods Siva and Vishnu are worshipped as satellites of Buddha. The Jains of the present day continue, as their forefathers always did, to employ Brahmans as their domestic chaplains for the performance of birth or death ceremonies, and even sometimes, it is said, for temple worship. Jainism has never cut itself away from its roots in Hinduism. Many Jains consider themselves to be Hindus, and describe their religion accordingly in census returns. That continuous close connexion between Brahmanical Hinduism and Jainism probably is the principal reason why the latter faith made no conquests outside of India.

Buddhism developed a much more independent existence. Both as a philosophy and a religion it so adapted itself to the needs of foreigners that in the course of time it nearly died out in India while acquiring new life in foreign lands. The Jains give the laity a prominent place, while the Buddhists rely mainly on their organized *Sangha*—the Community or Order of ordained friars. That organized Order has been the main instrument of Buddhist missionary expansion. No avowed Buddhist in any country would dream of describing himself as a Hindu by religion.<sup>2</sup> Readers

<sup>1</sup> See the author's article 'Kusinagara' in Hastings, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics*. Kasiā cannot represent Kusinagara, because that site was and long had been deserted in the time of the Chinese pilgrims, whereas building was continuous at Kasiā all through the Gupta period and afterwards.

<sup>2</sup> For unavowed, veiled, or crypto-Indian Buddhists see Nagendra Nāth Vasu, *The Modern Buddhism and its Followers in Orissa* (Hare Press,

who desire to understand thoroughly the philosophical, ethical, and theological tenets of Jainism and Buddhism, the points of agreement or divergence in the two systems, and the church regulations must study some or other of the many excellent books now available. Only a few points can be noted here.

**Jain doctrines.** Jain teaching lays stress upon the doctrine that man's personality is dual, comprising both material and spiritual natures. It rejects the Vedantist doctrine of the universal soul. Jains believe that not only men and animals, but also plants, minerals capable of growth, air, wind, and fire possess souls (*jīva*) endowed with various degrees of consciousness.<sup>1</sup> They hold that it is possible to inflict pain on a stone, or even on air or water. The belief in a supreme Deity, the creator of the universe, is emphatically denied. God is defined as being 'only the highest, the noblest, and the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man'. From that point of view Jainism may be said to anticipate Comte's 'religion of humanity'.

In ethics or practical morality 'the first principle is *ahimsā*, non-hurting of any kind of life, howsoever low may be the stage of its evolution'. The strange doctrine affirming the existence of *jīvas* in objects commonly called inanimate extends the Jain idea of *ahimsā* far beyond the Brahmanical or Buddhist notions.

The reader of Indian history is sometimes perplexed by the apparent contradiction of principles involved when a king orders the execution of a convict, guilty perhaps only of the killing of an animal. The following authoritative ruling on the subject helps to make intelligible the position taken up by Kumārapāla, king of Gujarāt in the twelfth century, who ruthlessly inflicted the capital penalty on all persons who in any way offended against the *ahimsā* doctrine:

'A true Jaina will do nothing to hurt the feelings of another person, man, woman, or child; nor will he violate the principles of Jainism. Jaina ethics are meant for men of all positions—for kings, warriors, traders, artisans, agriculturists, and indeed for men and women in every walk of life. . . . "Do your duty. Do it as humanely as you can." This, in brief, is the primary principle of Jainism. Non-killing cannot interfere with one's duties. The king, or the judge, has to hang a murderer. The murderer's act is the negation of a right of the murdered. The king's, or the judge's, order is the negation of this negation, and is enjoined by Jainism as a duty. Similarly, the soldier's killing on the battle-field.'

Calcutta, 1911), with the extremely learned Introduction by M. M. H. P. Sāstri.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Wordsworth, *Prelude* (ed. 2, 1851), Book III, p. 49:

To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,  
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,  
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,  
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass  
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all  
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.

The poet felt those sentiments while he was an undergraduate at Cambridge.

Jainism is an austere religion, demanding severe self-control in diverse ways, and imposing many inconvenient restraints. The teaching theoretically condemns caste, but in practice 'the modern Jaina is as fast bound as his Hindu brother in the iron fetters of caste'.

The Jains are divided into two main sects, the Svetāmbara, or 'white-robed', and the Digambara, or 'sky-clad', that is to say nude, which separated about the beginning of the second century A.C. Each sect has its own scriptures. A modern offshoot of the Svetāmbaras, called Sthānaka-vāsī, rejects the use of idols in worship.

Jains highly approve of suicide by slow starvation. The practice, abhorred by Buddhists, seems to outsiders inconsistent with the *ahimsā* doctrine, but Jain philosophy has an explanation, which will be found expounded in Mrs. Stevenson's book.

**The teaching of Buddha.** Gautama Buddha, like Mahāvīra and almost all prophets in his country, took over from the common stock of Indian ideas the theories of rebirth and *karma*, accepted generally by Indian thinkers as truths needing no proof. The *karma* doctrine means that the merits and demerits of a being in past existences determine his condition in the present life. Buddha held that to be born is an evil, that the highest good is deliverance from rebirth, that good *karma* will effect such deliverance, and that the acquisition of good *karma* requires a strictly moral life. His disciples were admonished to aim at purity in deed, word, and thought; observing ten commandments, namely, not to kill, steal, or commit adultery; not to lie, invent evil reports about other people, indulge in fault-finding or profane language; to abstain from covetousness and hatred, and to avoid ignorance. Special stress was laid on the virtues of truthfulness, reverence to superiors, and respect for animal life.

He held that men should follow what he called the 'Noble Eightfold Path', practising right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right exertion, right remembrance, and right meditation. That path was also described as the Middle Path, lying midway between sensuality and asceticism. Men and women of the laity could attain much success in travelling the way of holiness, but full satisfaction could be obtained only by joining the *Saṅgha* or Order of ordained monks, or rather friars. Women were permitted to become nuns, but nuns never occupied an important place in Buddhism. The *Saṅgha* of monks developed into a highly organized, wealthy, and powerful fraternity, which became the efficient instrument for the wide diffusion of Buddhism in Asia.

**Popular Buddhism.** Buddha can hardly be said to have intended to found a new religion. He taught an abstruse doctrine of metaphysics, which he used chiefly as the rational basis of his practical moral code. He was unwilling to discuss questions concerning the nature of God or the soul, the infinity of the universe, and so forth, holding that such discussions are unprofitable.

Without formally denying the existence of Almighty God, the Creator, he ignored Him. Buddha, although he denied the authority of the Vedas, did not seek to interfere with the current beliefs in the Hindu gods or with familiar superstitions; and, as a matter of fact, popular Buddhism from the very earliest times has always differed much from the austere religion of the books. Modern Burma, where everybody worships the Nats or spirits, while accepting without question the orthodox teaching of the monks, offers the best illustration of the state of things in ancient Buddhist India, as vividly represented in the sculptures. Buddhism in practice was a cheerful religion in India long ago, as it is in Burma now. The change to Puranic Hinduism has made India a sadder land.

**Transformation of Buddhism.** The person of Buddha inspired in his disciples such ardent affection and devotion that very soon after his death he was regarded as being something more than a man. By the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier, he had become a god to whom prayer might be offered. The primitive Buddhism which ignored the Divine was known in later times as the Hīna-yāna, or Lesser Vehicle of salvation, while the modified religion which recognized the value of prayer and acknowledged Buddha as the Saviour of mankind was called the Mahā-yāna, or the Greater Vehicle.

While the original official Buddhism was a dry, highly moralized philosophy much resembling in its practical operation the Stoic schools of Greece and Rome, the later emotional Buddhism approached closely to Christian doctrines in substance, although not in name. In another direction it became almost indistinguishable from Hinduism.

**No Buddhist period.** It must be clearly understood that Brahmanical Hinduism continued to exist and to claim innumerable adherents throughout the ages. It may well be doubted if Buddhism can be correctly described as having been the prevailing religion in India as a whole at any time. The phrase 'Buddhist period', to be found in many books, is false and misleading. Neither a Buddhist nor a Jain period ever existed. From time to time either Buddhism or Jainism obtained exceptional success and an unusually large percentage of adherents in the population of one kingdom or another, but neither heresy ever superseded Brahmanical Hinduism. Mahāvīra, as has been mentioned, had about 14,000 disciples when he died, a mere drop in the ocean of India's millions. Subsequent royal patronage largely extended his following, and at times Jainism became the state religion of certain kingdoms, in the sense that it was adopted and encouraged by certain kings, who carried with them many of their subjects. Instances of kings changing their creed are numerous. Buddhism probably continued to be an obscure local sect, confined to Magadha and the neighbouring regions, until Asoka gave it his powerful patronage more than two centuries after the death of Buddha. The fortune of Buddhism was made by Asoka, but even he never

attempted to force all his subjects to enter the Buddhist fold. While he insisted on certain rules of conduct concerning diet and other matters being observed by everybody in accordance with the orders of government, he did not interfere with anybody's faith. Akbar pursued the same policy in the sixteenth century. Even in Asoka's age it is likely that the majority of the people in many, if not in most, provinces followed the guidance of the Brahmins. The relative proportions of orthodox Hindus and Buddhist dissenters varied enormously according to locality. Many details on the subject can be extracted from the narratives of the Chinese pilgrims in the fifth and seventh centuries after Christ, and there can be no doubt that similar relations between the various Indian sects or religions must have existed in earlier times.

The Hinduism of the Brahmins did not remain unchanged. The attacks delivered by Mahāvīra, Buddha, and other less celebrated prophets on the elaborate ritual and bloody sacrifices favoured by the Brahmins of the sixth century B.C. resulted, not only in the development of Jainism and Buddhism as distinct sects or religions, but in profound modification in the ideas of those Hindus who still professed obedience to the Vedas and to Brahman gurus. The *ahimsā* principle of non-injury to animal life gained many adherents, so that the more shocking elements in the old Hindu ritual tended to fall into disrepute. The change of feeling, as already noted, can be traced in many passages of the *Mahābhārata*. Bloody sacrifices still retain the approval of considerable sections of the population, but the general tendency during the last two thousand years has been to discredit them. The movement of sentiment on the subject continues to this day, and may be observed on a large scale in the peninsula. The slaughter of victims in appalling numbers is still practised in the Telugu country. For instance, at Ellōre in the Kistna (Krishnā) District, a thousand victims may be slain on one day at a certain festival, so that the blood flows down from the place of sacrifice 'in a regular flood'. But in the Tamil country 'there is a widespread idea that animal sacrifices are distasteful to good and respectable deities', with the result that such offerings are going out of fashion.<sup>1</sup> The reader will not fail to take note of the proof that two thousand years are not nearly enough for the completion of a single change in religious sentiment throughout India. Perhaps the zeal of ardent reformers may be chilled by the thought.

**Brahmanical cults.** The reaction against the atheistic tendency of both Jainism and Buddhism on the one hand and against the formalism of a religion of ritual on the other resulted in the evolution among Brahmanical Hindus of the religion of *bhakti*, or lively loving faith in a personal, fatherly God. Although it is impossible to fix dates, Bhandarkar has shown that such devotion to the Deity under the name of Vāsudeva may be traced

<sup>1</sup> Whitehead, *The Village Gods of Southern India* (1916), pp. 66, 94.



back as far as Pāṇini's time, whatever that was.<sup>1</sup> Other facts indicate the existence of the worship of Vāsudeva in the two centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. The noble *Bhagavadgītā*, the date of which cannot be determined, offers the earliest formal exposition of the *bhakti* doctrine, the Deity being represented under the name and person of Krishna.

The Bhakti religion, which still has numerous adherents in the western parts of Hindostan and many other provinces of India, seems to have arisen in the Brahmarshi region in the neighbourhood of Mathurā and Delhi. Vāsudeva and Krishna both became identified with Vishnu, whose cult has a long history. Simultaneously the cults of Śiva and other forms of the Deity were developed, especially in the south. It is impossible to trace the details of religious evolution in a general history, but it is important to remember that much was happening inside the fold of Brahmanical Hinduism while Buddhism and Jainism were being founded and started on their more conspicuous adventures outside.

The 'Nine Nandas'. The dynastic lists of the older Purāṇas, which are the best authority on the subject, state that the Śaishunāga dynasty comprised ten kings, of whom the last two were named Nandivardhana and Mahānandin. Their reigns are said to have covered eighty-three years. They were followed by the Nine Nandas, namely, King Mahāpadma and his eight sons, whose rule altogether is said to have lasted a century. It is clear that the history has been falsified in some way and that the chronology cannot be right. The traditions about the Nandas as recorded in the Purāṇas, sundry Jain and Buddhist books, the *Mudrā Rākshasa* drama, perhaps composed in the fourth or fifth century A. C., and by the Greek writers, are hopelessly discrepant in many respects, but it is certain that the king deposed and slain by Chandragupta Maurya with the aid of his Brahman minister Chāṇakya, alias Kautilya or Vishnugupta, was a Nanda, that he was of low caste, that he was a heretic hostile to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and that he was a rich, powerful sovereign, believed by the Greeks to control an army of 20,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 2,000 chariots, and 3,000 or 4,000 elephants. Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to harmonize the conflicting traditions and to evolve a reasonable scheme of chronology. I cannot pretend to solve the puzzle, but would suggest that the existence in the twelfth century of a form of the Vikrama era called A-nanda or 'without Nanda' may possibly give the clue. It has been proved that the Hindi poet Chand used the A-nanda mode of computation, leaving out the period of 91 (or 90) years belonging to the dynasty of the Nine Nandas, who were considered to be unholy persons unworthy of inclusion in orthodox Hindu annals. That fact suggests that the dynasty of the Nine Nandas may have begun 91 years before the accession of Chandragupta Maurya, which took place about 322 B.C. If that hypothesis should prove

<sup>1</sup> Most probably the seventh century B. C. in my opinion, for which good authority might be cited.



correct, the beginning of the dynasty of the Nine Nandas must be placed in about 413 B.C. The last two Saisunāga kings of the Puranic lists, namely, *Nandi-var dhana* and *Mahā-nandin*, must be reckoned also as Nandas as their names would seem to indicate. It is unquestionable that the Nanda king dethroned by Chandragupta Maurya was 'a heretic in Hindu eyes, because the concluding verse of Kautilya's *Arthasāstra* states that 'this *Sāstra* (scripture) has been made by him who from intolerance (of misrule) quickly rescued the scriptures (*śāstram*) and the science of weapons (*sastram*) and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king.' The necessary inference seems to be that the hated Nanda king was either a Jain or a Buddhist, whom orthodox writers did not care to acknowledge as a lawful sovereign. The supposition that the last Nanda was a follower of either Mahāvīra or Gautama is confirmed by the fact that one form of the local tradition attributed to him the erection of the Pīnch Pahārī at Patna, a group of ancient *stūpas* which might be either Jain or Buddhist.<sup>1</sup>

**Invasion of Alexander the Great.** The invasion of India by Alexander the Great of Macedon in 326 B.C., which occurred during the rule of the Nandas in Magadha and is more interesting than any other episode of early Indian history to most European readers, made so little impression on the minds of the inhabitants of the country that no distinct reference to it is to be found in any branch of ancient Indian literature. Our detailed knowledge of his proceedings is derived solely from Greek authors.<sup>2</sup> The name of Sikandar or Alexander is often on the lips of the people in the Panjāb, but it is doubtful how far a genuine tradition of the Macedonian invader survives in that country. Spurious traditions are apt to be generated from confused recollections of the investigations and talk of modern archaeologists. There is also reason to believe that the popular memory sometimes confounds Sikandar of Macedon with his namesakes, the Lodi Sultan of Delhi (1489-1517) and the image-breaking Sultan of Kashmir (1394-1420). A genuine tradition of Philip's son undoubtedly has been preserved in the families of no less than eight chieftains in the neighbourhood of the Indus and Oxus, all of whom claim the honour of descent from Alexander. The claims may be well founded to some extent, because the historians record that Kleophis, Queen of the Assakēnoi,

<sup>1</sup> The rendering of the *Arthasāstra* text is that of Shāma Sastri. The text of the Khāravela inscription has been settled in 1917 by R. D. Banerji and K. P. Jayaswal as far as possible (*J. B. O. Res. Soc.*, vols. iv, v). Khāravela's 13th year—the year 165 or 164 of the era of 'Rājā Muriya', *scil.* Chandragupta, which began about 322 B.C., and so—about 157 or 158 B.C. A Nanda king, probably Nandivardhana, had made a canal about 300 years before the fifth year of Khāravela (165 B.C.), and so in about 465 B.C. For the Patna *stūpas* see Beal, *Records*, II. 94. Some people ascribed them to Asoka.

<sup>2</sup> Archaeological evidence, chiefly numismatic, corroborates the Greek historians in certain details.

was reputed to have borne a son to Alexander.<sup>1</sup> The Tungani soldiers who formed the garrison of Yarkand in 1835 also alleged that Macedonian soldier colonists left behind by the conqueror were their ancestors.

Alexander, after completing the conquest of Bactria to the south of the Oxus, resolved to execute his cherished purpose of surpassing the mythical exploits of Herakles his reputed ancestor, Semiramis the fabled Assyrian queen, Cyrus, king of Persia, and the divine Dionysos, by effecting the subjugation of India. When he undertook the task very little accurate information about the scene of the proposed conquests was at his disposal. The sacred soil of India had never been violated by any earlier European invader, nor had the country been visited by travellers from the west, so far as is known. Wild tales concerning the marvels to be seen beyond the Indus were current, but nothing authentic seems to have been on record, and the bold adventurer was obliged to collect the necessary intelligence as he advanced.

Alexander, however, although adventurous, was not imprudent. He never moved without taking adequate precautions to maintain communication with his distant base in Macedon thousands of miles away, and to protect his flanks from hostile attack. His intelligence department seems to have provided him with information accurate enough to ensure the success of each operation.

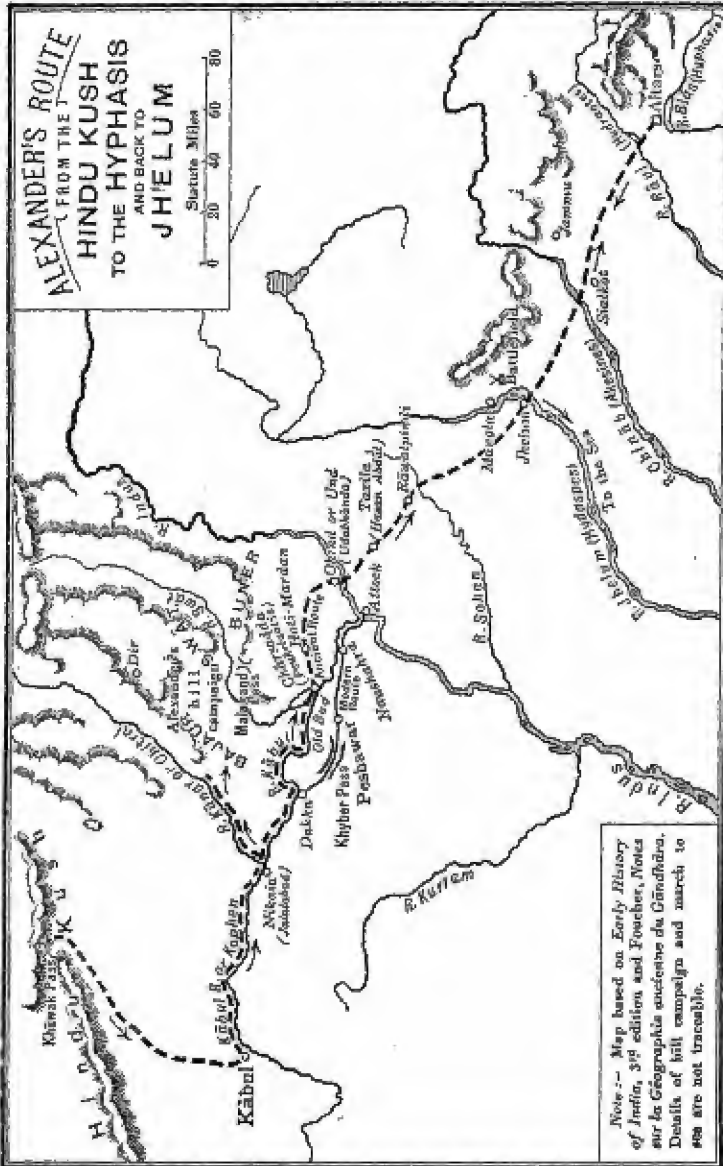
**Campaign in the hills.** He crossed the Hindu Kush mountains in May, 327 B.C., and after garrisoning either Kābul itself or a stronghold in the neighbourhood, spent the remainder of the year in subduing the fierce tribes which then as now inhabited the valleys of Suwāt (Swat) and Bājaur. He gave them a lesson such as they have never received since from Afghans, Moguls, or English, and penetrated into secluded fastnesses which no European has ever seen again. His ruthless operations effected their purpose so thoroughly that his communications were never harassed by the tribes.

**The Indus crossed.** In February, 326 B.C., at the beginning of spring, he crossed the Indus, then regarded as the frontier of the Persian empire, by a bridge of boats built at Und or Ohind above Attock. Thence he advanced to Takkasila or Taxila, 'a great and flourishing city', the capital of Āmbhi, ruler of the region between the Indus and the Hydaspes or Jihlam (Jhelum) river. Āmbhi, who was at feud with the chiefs of neighbouring principalities, welcomed the invader and received him hospitably at his capital. The rich presents offered by the Indian king were requited tenfold by his generous and politic guest. It is worthy of note that the supplies tendered by Āmbhi comprised '3,000 oxen fatted for the shambles' besides 10,000 or more sheep.

<sup>1</sup> The chieftains referred to are: (1) the former Mirs of Badakhshān, dispossessed about 1822; (2-5) the chiefs of Darwāz, Kulāb, Shighnān, and Wakhan; and (6-8) the chiefs of Chitrāl, Gilgit, and Iskardo (Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, &c., 2nd ed., 1835, vol. iii, pp. 180-90).

# ALEXANDER'S ROUTE FROM THE HINDU KUSH TO THE HYPHASIS AND BACK TO JHELUM

Scale in Miles  
0 20 40 60 80



Note:— Map based on *Early History of India*, 3rd edition and *Foucher, Notes sur la Géographie ancienne du Caucase*. Details of hill country and march to sea are not traceable.

That statement, made incidentally, is good evidence that in 326 B.C. the people of Taxila were still willing to fatten cattle for slaughter and the feeding of honoured guests, in Vedic fashion.

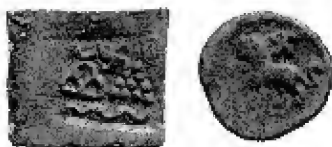
**Taxila.** The situation of Taxila in a pleasant valley, amply supplied with water, well adapted for defence, and lying on the highroad from Central Asia to the interior of India, was admirably suited for the site of a great city. The occupation of the site began at a period so remote that when the excavations now in progress under skilled guidance shall be further advanced we may hope to find traces of the most ancient known urban settlement in India. The brilliantly successful operations conducted by the Director-General of Archaeology have as yet barely touched the Bīr mound in the southern part of the ruins of Taxila, which represents the city where Alexander halted.<sup>1</sup> The remains of the ancient capital, or rather series of successive capitals, gradually shifted from south to north, cover a space of at least twelve square miles at Hasan Abdāl and several other villages situated about twenty miles to the north-west of Rāwalpindi, which is the strategical representative of Taxila. The cantonnement of Rāwalpindi is the most important military station in India. The line of the ancient highway has been followed by the Grand Trunk Road and the North-Western Railway.

In the time of Alexander the Panjāb was divided among a large number of small states, Taxila being the capital only of the tract between the Indus and the Hydaspes.

Its military importance, therefore, was less than that of its modern representative. The invader having been received by the local king as a friend, no fighting took place in the neighbourhood of Taxila, and no information concerning its defences is recorded. Ambhi supplied a contingent of five thousand men to help Alexander.

The testimony of the Buddhist *Jātaka* or Birth stories, which, although undated, may be applied fairly to the age of Alexander, proves by a multitude of incidental allusions that Taxila was then the leading seat of Hindu learning, where crowds of pupils from all quarters were taught the 'three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments'. It was the fashion to send princes and the sons of well-to-do Brahmans on attaining the age of sixteen to complete their education at Taxila, which may be properly described as a university town. The medical school there enjoyed a special reputation, but all arts and sciences could be studied under the most eminent professors.

**Strange Taxilan customs.** The willing offering of 3,000 oxen to be converted into beef has been noted as a remarkable feature in the social usage of the Taxilans. They had also several



Coins of Taxila.

<sup>1</sup> The remark refers to 1917.

peculiar customs, which struck the Greek observers as 'strange and unusual'. The practices described are so startling that it is well to quote the exact words of Strabo, who copied Aristoboulos, a companion of Alexander, and an author deserving of the fullest credit.

'He makes mention of some strange and unusual customs which existed. Those who are unable from poverty to bestow their daughters in marriage expose them for sale in the market-place in the flower of their age, a crowd being assembled by sound of the [conch] shells and drums, which are also used for sounding the war-note. When any person steps forward, first the back of the girl as far as the shoulders is uncovered for his examination and then the parts in front, and if she pleases him and allows herself at the same time to be persuaded, they cohabit on such terms as may be agreed upon. The dead are thrown out to be devoured by vultures. The custom of having many wives prevails here and is common among other races. He says that he had heard from some persons of wives burning themselves along with their deceased husbands and doing so gladly; and that those women who refused to burn themselves were held in disgrace. The same things have been stated by other writers.'

The marriage market obviously suggests comparison with the similar institution in the territory of Babylon, fully described with approval by Herodotus (1. 196), who observes that the sales took place once a year in every village. He heard that the Venetians of Illyria had a like custom. The casting out of the dead to be devoured by vultures was a practice of the Zoroastrian Iranians, and also of the Tibetans. The definite proof of the usage of widow-burning or suttee at such an early certain date is interesting. Among the Kathaioi of the eastern Panjāb also 'the custom prevailed that widows should be burned with their husbands'. The scanty evidence as to Taxilan institutions taken as a whole suggests that the civilization of the people was compounded of various elements, Babylonian, Iranian, Scythian, and Vedic. Suttee probably was a Scythian rite introduced from Central Asia.

**Religion and civilization.** When the fact is remembered that in later times the Panjāb came to be regarded as an unholy, non-Aryan country, it is worthy of note that the *Jātakas* represent Taxila as the seat of study of the three Vedas and all the other branches of Hīndu learning. The population of the Panjāb in Alexander's time probably included many divers races. Strabo (Book XV, chap. i, secs. 61, 63-8) gives an interesting account of the Brahman ascetics of Taxila, chiefly derived from the works of Aristoboulos and Onesikritos. It is clear that the Brahmanical religion was firmly established, notwithstanding the survival of strange customs, and in all likelihood the co-existence of Zoroastrian or Magian fire-worship and other foreign cults. It is manifest that a high degree of material civilization had been attained, and that all the arts and crafts incident to the life of a wealthy,

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, Book XV, chap. i, sec. 62; transl. McCrindle in *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature* (Constable, 1901), p. 69. In sec. 28 Strabo observes that Taxila was governed by 'good laws'.

cultured city were familiar. The notices accorded by Alexander's officers permit no doubt that in the fourth century B. C. the history of Indian civilization was already a long one. Their statements have a material bearing upon discussions concerning the date of the introduction of writing and the chronology of Vedic literature.

**Advance against Pōros.** Alexander, after allowing his army a pleasant rest at hospitable Taxila, advanced eastward, to attack Pōros, or Pūru, the king of the country between the Hydaspes (Jihlam) and Akesines (Chināb), who felt himself strong enough to defy the invader. The Greeks, who were much impressed by the high stature of the men in the Panjāb, acknowledged that 'in the art of war they were far superior to the other nations by which Asia was at that time inhabited'. The resolute opposition of Pōros consequently was not to be despised. Alexander experienced much difficulty in crossing the Hydaspes river, then, at



POROS MEDAL.

the end of June or the beginning of July, in full flood and guarded by a superior force. His horses would not face the elephants on the opposite bank. After a delay of several weeks he succeeded in stealing a passage at a sharp bend in the river some sixteen miles above his camp and getting across with the help of a convenient island. The hostile armies met in the Karri Plain marked by the villages Sirwāl and Pakral.

**Battle of the Hydaspes.** The army of Pōros, consisting of 90,000 infantry, four thousand cavalry, three hundred chariots, and two hundred mighty war elephants, was defeated after a hard fight, and annihilated. All the elephants were captured or killed, the chariots were destroyed, twelve thousand men were slain, and nine thousand taken prisoners. The total Macedonian casualties did not exceed a thousand. The primary cause of the Greek victory was the consummate leadership of Alexander, the greatest general in the history of the world. Pōros, a giant six and a half feet in height, fought to the last, and received nine wounds before he was taken prisoner. The victor, who willingly responded to his captive's proud request that he might be treated as a king, secured the alliance of the Indian monarch by prudent generosity.

The elephants on which Pōros had relied proved unmanageable in the battle and did more harm to their friends than to their foes. The archers in the chariots were not a match for the mounted

bowmen of Alexander; and the slippery state of the ground hindered the Indian infantry from making full use of their formidable bows, which they were accustomed to draw after resting one end upon the earth, and pressing it with the left foot. The Indian infantry man also carried a heavy two-handed sword slung from the left shoulder, a buckler of undressed ox-hide, and sometimes javelins in place of a bow.

**Advance to the Hyphasis.** In due course Alexander advanced eastwards, regardless of the rain, defeated the Glausai or Glaukanikoi, crossed both the Akesines (Chināb) and the Hydraotes or Rāvi, stormed Sangala, the stronghold of the Kathaioi, and threatened the Kahudrakas (Oxydrakai), who dwelt on the farther bank of the Rāvi. The king then advanced as far as the Hyphasis or Biās, where he was stopped by his soldiers, who refused firmly to plunge farther into unknown lands occupied by formidable king-

doms. The limits of the Greek advance were marked by the erection of twelve altars of cut stone on the northern bank of the Biās, at a point where it flows from east to west between Indaura in the Kāngrā and Mirthal in the Gurdāspur District, close to the foot of the hills. The cutting back of the northern bank, which has extended for about five miles, has swept away all traces of the massive buildings.<sup>2</sup>

**Retreat and river voyage.** Alexander, intensely disappointed, was forced to return along the way by which he had come. He appointed Pōros to act as his viceroy over seven nations which shared the territory between the Hyphasis and Hydaspes, while he himself made preparations for executing the astonishingly bold project of taking his army down the course of the Panjāb rivers to the sea. A fleet, numbering perhaps two thousand vessels of all sizes, had been built by his officers on the upper waters of the Hydaspes. When all was ready in October, 326 B. C., the

<sup>2</sup> (1) Dagger; (2) sword, hung from shoulder; (3) infantry shield; (4), (5) cavalry shields; (6) pike or javelin; (7) *vajra*, carried in king's hand; (8), (9) axes; (10) trident; (11) elephant goad.

<sup>3</sup> Addenda to *E. H. I.*, 3rd ed. (1914), p. 511, as confirmed by later communications from Mr. Shuttleworth.

voyage began, the ships being escorted by an army of 120,000 men marching along the banks. The extensive changes in the courses of the rivers of the Panjāb and Sind, as mentioned more than once, forbid the tracing of Alexander's progress in detail, but he certainly passed through the Sibi country, now in the Jhang District, and then inhabited by rude folk clad in skins and armed with clubs, who submitted and were spared. Seven centuries later, when Sibi had become more civilized, its capital was Sivipura or Shōrkōt<sup>1</sup>. A neighbouring tribe, called Agalassoi by the Greeks, who dared to resist the invader, met with a terrible fate. The inhabitants of one town to the number of 20,000 set fire to their dwellings and cast themselves with their wives and children into the flames—an early and appalling instance of the practice of *jauhar* so often recorded in Muhammadan times.

The most formidable opposition to the Greek invaders was offered by a confederacy of the Mālavas (Malloi), Kshudrakas (Oxydrakai), and other tribes dwelling along the Rāvi and Biās. The confederate forces, said to have numbered 80,000 or 90,000 well-equipped infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 700 or 800 chariots, should have sufficed to destroy the Macedonian army, but the superior generalship of Alexander as usual gave him decisive victory. The survivors of the Mālavas submitted. The Kshudrakas, luckily for themselves, had been late for the fighting and so escaped the ruthless slaughter which befell their allies.

**Wealth of the Mālavas.** The presents offered by the envoys of the Mālavas and their allies indicate the wealth of the community and the advanced state of their material civilization. The gifts comprised 1,030 (or according to another account 500) four-horsed chariots; 1,000 bucklers; a great quantity of cotton cloth; 100 talents of 'white iron', probably meaning steel; the skins of crocodiles ('very large lizards'); a quantity of tortoise shell; and some tame lions and tigers of extraordinary size.

**Patala.** Several nations in Upper Sind having been subdued, Alexander reached Patala at the apex of the delta as it then existed. The town was not far from Bahmanābād, the ancient city subsequently superseded by Mansūriya. It is impossible to fix localities with accuracy for the reason already stated. Alexander made arrangements for establishing a strong naval station at Patala.

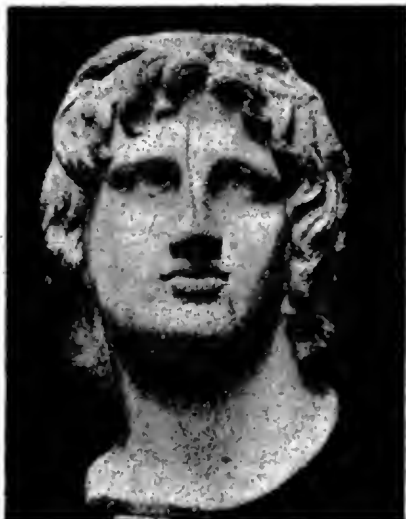
**Movements of Alexander and Nearchos.** He sent Krateros with elephants and heavy troops into Persia through the Mulla Pass and across Balōchistan, while he himself advanced to the mouths of the Indus, then in a position very different from that which they now occupy. In those days the Runn of Cutch was a gulf of the sea and one arm of the Indus emptied itself into it. Most of the existing delta has been formed since Alexander's time.

Early in October, 325 B. C., Alexander, having spent about ten months on the voyage down the rivers, quitted the neighbourhood of the modern Karāchī with his remaining troops, crossed the

<sup>1</sup> The name Sibipura occurs in a Buddhist inscription from Shōrkōt dated 83 [G. E.] = A. D. 402-3 (Vogel in *J. P. H. S.*, vol. i, p. 174).



Arabis or Habb river forming the boundary between India and Gedrosia,<sup>1</sup> and started to march for Persia through absolutely unknown country. The troops suffered terribly from heat and thirst, which destroyed multitudes of the camp followers, but in February the remnant of the soldiers emerged in Karmania, having got into touch with the fleet which had started late in October and sailed round the coast under Admiral Nearchos. The story of the adventures of both Alexander and Nearchos is of surpassing interest, but unfortunately far too long for insertion.



ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

Its interest depends on the details. In May, 324 B. C., Alexander arrived safely at Sūsa in Persia. His Indian expedition had lasted just three years. He died at Babylon, near the modern Baghdad, in June, 323 B. C., in the thirty-third year of his age. 'Into thirteen years he had compressed the energies of many lifetimes.'

**Disappearance of Greek authority.** Alexander undoubtedly had intended to annex permanently the Indian provinces in the basin of the Indus and to include them in his vast empire extending across Asia into Greece. The arrangements which he made to carry out his intention were suitable and adequate, but his premature death rendered his plans fruitless. When the

second partition of the empire was effected at Triparadeisos in 321 B. C., Antipater appointed Pōros and Āmbhi as a matter of form to the charge of the Indus valley and the Panjāb. The conditions, however, did not permit them to fulfil their commission, and by 317 at latest all trace of Macedonian authority in India had vanished.

**Effect on India of the invasion.** Although the direct effects of Alexander's expedition on India appear to have been small, his proceedings had an appreciable influence on the history of the country. They broke down the wall of separation between west and east, and opened up four distinct lines of communication, three by land and one by sea. The land routes which he proved

<sup>1</sup> See Addenda, *E. H. I.*, ed. 3 (1914), p. 511. I am now convinced that Tomaschek is right. The Arabis certainly means the Habb (Hab of I. G.) and not the Purāli.

to be practicable were those through Kābul, the Mulla Pass in Balōchistan, and Gedrosia. Nearchos demonstrated that the sea voyage round the coast of Makrān offered few difficulties to sailors, once the necessary local information had been gained, which he lacked. The immediate formation of Greek kingdoms in Western Asia ensured from the first a certain amount of exchange of ideas between India and Europe. The establishment of the Graeco-Bactrian monarchy in the middle of the third century B.C. brought about the actual subjugation of certain Indian districts by Greek kings. The Hellenistic influence on Indian art, which is most plainly manifested in the Gandhāra sculptures dating from the early centuries of the Christian era, may be traced less conspicuously in other directions. There is good reason to believe that Buddhist teaching was considerably modified by contact with the Greek gods, and that the use of images in particular as an essential element in the Buddhist cult was mainly due to Greek example. Whatever Hellenistic elements in Indian civilization can be detected were all indirect consequences of Alexander's invasion. The Greek influence never penetrated deeply. Indian polity and the structure of society resting on the caste basis remained substantially unchanged, and even in military science Indians showed no disposition to learn the lessons taught by the sharp sword of Alexander. The kings of Hind preferred to go on in the old way, trusting to their elephants and chariots, supported by enormous hosts of inferior infantry. They never mastered the shock tactics of Alexander's cavalry, which were repeated by Bābur in the sixteenth century with equal success.

**Indian influence on Europe.** On the other hand, the West learned something from India in consequence of the communications opened up by Alexander's adventure. Our knowledge of the facts is so scanty and fragmentary that it is difficult to make any positive assertions with confidence, but it is safe to say that the influence of Buddhist ideas on Christian doctrine may be traced in the Gnostic forms of Christianity, if not elsewhere. The notions of Indian philosophy and religion which filtered into the Roman empire flowed through channels opened by Alexander.

The information about India collected by Alexander's officers under his intelligent direction received no material additions until the closing years of the fifteenth century, when Vasco da Gama finally rent the veil which had so long hidden India from Europe and Europe from India.

**India in the fourth century B. C.** Although it is impossible to write the history of any Indian state in the fourth century B. C., except that of Magadha to a certain extent, we are not altogether ignorant of the conditions, political, social, economical, and religious which prevailed in that age. It is clear that no paramount imperial power existed. In the Panjāb and Sind, the two provinces actually visited by Alexander, the separate states were numerous and independent. The country between the Hydaspes and the Hyphasis alone was occupied by seven

distinct nations or tribes. Some of the states, like Taxila and the realm of Pōros, were ruled by Rājās. Others, like the territories of the Mālavas and Kshudrakas (Malloi and Oxydrakai), were governed as republics, apparently by aristocratic oligarchies. The Kshudrakas, who sent a hundred and fifty of their most eminent men to negotiate terms, pleaded their special attachment to freedom and self-government from the most ancient times. Unfortunately the nature of the government in the numerous republican states of ancient India is imperfectly recorded. The existence of such states is noticed in the *Arthashastra*, and their characteristics are the subject of a special section of the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>1</sup>

The statement made by Megasthenes twenty years or so after Alexander's invasion that 118 distinct nations or tribes were said to exist in the whole of India proves that the large number of distinct governments in the Panjāb and Sind was in no way exceptional. Such states were engaged in unceasing wars among themselves, with endless changes of rank and frontiers. Alexander profited by the dissensions of the Panjāb Rājās, and the *Arthashastra* frankly lays down the principles :

'Whoever is superior in power shall wage war. Whoever is rising in power may break the agreement of peace.'

The king who is situated anywhere on the circumference of the conqueror's territory is termed the enemy.'

Such maxims, German in their unscrupulousness, could not but result in chronic warfare. The treatise quoted is in my opinion a faithful mirror of Indian political conditions in the days of Alexander. The administrative system described in it will be noticed more conveniently in connexion with the account of the Maurya government.

**Extensive commerce.** The numerous details recorded both by the Greeks and by Kautilya prove beyond doubt that the Indians of the fourth century B.C. were advanced in material civilization, that they conducted extensive commerce internal and foreign, and were amply supplied with the luxuries of life. Incidental observations show that the countries of the extreme south were well known in the north, and that active intercourse for business purposes bound together all parts of India. A few details will establish the accuracy of that proposition.

We learn that the best elephants came from the eastern realms ; Anga (Bhāgalpur and Mungir), Kalinga (Orissa), and Karusa (Shāhābād) being specially named. The worst animals came from Saurāshtra (Kāthiāwār), and Panchajana (probably the Pāñch Mahāls in Gujarāt). Those of medium quality were obtained along the Dasān river of Bundēlkhand and farther west.

Kautilya was of opinion that the commerce with the south was

<sup>1</sup> *Sānti Parva*, 107 ; transcribed and translated by K. P. Jayaswal, 'Republics in the *Mahābhārata*' (*J. B. O. Res. Soc.*, vol. i (1915), p. 173). The subject has been discussed with much learning and at considerable length by R. C. Majumdar in *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, chap. iii, Calcutta, 1918.

of greater importance than that with the north, because the more precious commodities came from the peninsula, while the northern regions supplied only blankets, skins, and horses. Gold, diamonds, pearls, other gems, and conch shells are specified as products of the south. The Tāmraparni river in Tinnevely, the Pāndya country of Madura, and Ceylon are named. We hear of textile fabrics from Benares, Madura, the Konkan, and even from China. Commerce by land and sea with foreign countries was regulated by many ordinances, and passports were required by all persons entering or leaving India.<sup>1</sup> The coinage was of a primitive character. The coins most commonly used were of the kind called 'punch-marked', because their surface is stamped with separate marks



PUNCH-MARKED COINS.

made at different times by different punches. Such coins in base silver are found all over India. Specimens in copper occur, but are rare. The greater number are roughly square or oblong bits of metal cut out of a strip. The circular pieces are scarce. Roughly cast coins of early date are common in some localities.

**Religion.** Certain matters concerning the history of religions have been discussed in connexion with Taxila. A few other miscellaneous observations will not be out of place. The deities specifically mentioned include Zeus Ombrios—the rain-god—which term must be intended to denote Indra; the Indian Herakles worshipped by the Surasenas of Mathurā, who may be identified with Krishna's brother Balarāma; and the river Ganges.<sup>2</sup> The dated references to the Krishna cult and the veneration of the Ganges are worth noting.

The authority of the Brahmins was secure and fully recognized. They occupied a town in the Mālava territory, which probably was an *agrahara* or proprietary grant, and everywhere they were

<sup>1</sup> *Arthasāstra*, Book II, chaps. 2, 11, 16, 28, 34; Book VII, chap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, Book XV, chap. i, secs. 59, 69; Arrian, *Indika*, chap. 8.

the councillors of the Rājās. In Sind they used their influence to induce the local chiefs to resist the invader, and paid with their lives for their advice.<sup>1</sup>

Quintus Curtius notes the cult of trees, and asserts that violation of sacred trees was a capital offence. Brahmans are said to have been accustomed to eat flesh, but not that of animals which assist man in his labours. That remark seems to imply the sacredness of horned cattle in the eyes of Brahmans, although other people might still eat beef.

### TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE SAISUNĀGA AND NANDA DYNASTIES

Serial No.	King, as in Matsya Purāna	Probable date of ac- cession B.C.	Remarks.
Saisunāgas.			
1	Sisunāga	642	Originally Rājā of Kāśī or Benares. No events recorded; 60 years allowed for four reigns.
2	Kākavarna	}	
3	Kshemadharman		
4	Kshemajit or Kshatranjas		
5	Bimbisāra or Srenika	582	Built New Rājagriha; conquered Anga; contemporary with Mahāvira and Buddha; reputed to be a Jain.
6	Ajātasatru or Kūnika	554	Built fort of Pātaliputra; defeated rulers of Vaisālī and Kosala; death of Buddha; death of Mahāvira.
7	Darsaka	527	Mentioned in <i>Svapna-Vāsavadattā</i> of Bhāsa.
8	Udāsin or Udaya	503	Built city of Kusumapura on the Ganges near Pātaliputra on the Sōn.
9	Nandivardhana	470	{ Few events recorded; may be considered to be Nandas, as indicated by the names. (Khāvela inscription.)
10	Mahānandin		
The Nine Nandas.			
11	{ Mahāpadma and 8 sons, 2 generations	413	Low caste heretics, hostile to Brahmans and Kshatriyas; destroyed by Chandragupta and Kautilya.
12		(91 years before Chandragupta)	
Mauryas.			
13	Chandragupta	322 (? 325)	Date approximately correct.

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Anab.*, Book VI, chaps. 7, 17.

CHRONOLOGY  
OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

(Dates accurate)

B. C.

- 334. A. started on campaign against Persia; battle of the Granicus (Thargelion).
- 333. Battle of Issus.
- 332. Conquest of Egypt.
- 331. Foundation of Alexandria in Egypt; battle of Gaugamela (Arbela).
- 330. A. in Persia; death of Darius.
- 328-7. A. in Bactria.

*Indian Expedition* (leading dates only)

- 327. May. Crossing of Hindu Kush range.
- 327. June to December. Campaign in the hills of Bajaur and Suwāt (Swat).
- 326. February. Crossing of the Indus.
- 326. Beginning of July. Battle of Hydaspes.
- 326. September. Arrival at the Hyphasis; erection of altars; forced return.
- 326. End of October. Beginning of voyage down the rivers.
- 325. January. Defeat of the Málavas (Malloi).
- 325. October, beginning of. A. started on march through Gedrosia.
- 325. October, end of. Nearchos started on voyage along the coast to Persian Gulf.
- 324. February. A. and the remains of his army in Karmania.
- 324. May. A. at Sūsa in Persia.
- 323. June. Death of Alexander at Babylon.

AUTHORITIES

The references given here are merely supplementary to those in *E. H. I.*<sup>3</sup> (1914), and in the foot-notes to this chapter.

Sir J. H. MARSHALL has issued preliminary reports of his excavations at Taxila in the *Annual Reports of the Archaeol. Survey of India*; *J. P. H. S.*, vol. iii (1914, 1915); and *J. R. A. S.* for 1914 and 1916.

The articles by S. V. VENKATESVARA on 'The Ancient History of Magadha' (*Ind. Ant.*, 1916, pp. 16, 28) are useful and suggestive, even when not convincing.

SHAMASASTRY (SHAMA SASTRI) published his revised version of KAUTILYA'S *Arthasāstra* in an 8vo volume at Bangalore, 1916.

The difficult and hitherto obscure subject of Jainism has been made fairly intelligible by two authoritative books, namely, Mrs. SINCLAIR STEVENSON, M.A., Sc.D., *The Heart of Jainism*, Oxford University Press, 1915; and JAGMANDERLAL JAINI, M.A., *Outlines of Jainism*, Cambridge University Press, 1916. Both have been quoted in the text.

Sir R. G. BHANDARKAR'S treatise on Vaishnavism, &c., in the *Grundriss* (Strassburg, 1913) is important.

The story of Alexander's reign prior to the Indian expedition may be read best in BURY, *A History of Greece* (Macmillan, 1904). The fullest account of the Indian campaign is that in *E. H. I.*<sup>3</sup>

The dates of the dynasties have been arranged to suit the new readings of the Khāravēla inscription, *ante*, p. 58 n.

## BOOK II

### HINDU INDIA FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE MAURYA DYNASTY IN 322 B. C. TO THE SEVENTH CENTURY A. C.

#### CHAPTER I

Chandragupta Maurya, the first historical emperor of India, and his institutions ; Bindusāra.

**From darkness to light.** The advent of the Maurya dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian. Chronology suddenly becomes definite, almost precise ; a huge empire springs into existence, unifying the innumerable fragments of distracted India ; the kings, who may be described with justice as emperors, are men of renown, outstanding personalities whose qualities can be discerned, albeit dimly, through the mists of time ; gigantic world-wide religious movements are initiated, of which the effects are still felt ; and the affairs of secluded Hind are brought into close touch with those of the outer world.

The manners of the court, the constitution of the government, the methods of administration, the principles of law, and the course of commerce under the Maurya sovereigns for nearly a hundred years in the fourth and third centuries B. C. are known to us in the twentieth century A. C. far more intimately than are the doings and institutions of any other Indian monarch until the days of Akbar, the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth.

**Authorities for the Maurya age.** We are indebted for this extraordinary wealth of knowledge concerning a section of the remote past mainly to three sources, namely, the treatise on statecraft composed by Chandragupta Maurya's able minister, the Brahman variously known as Vishnugupta, Kautilya (Kautalya), or Chānakya ; the testimony of the Greeks who visited India either with Alexander or a generation later ; and the imperishable records of Asoka inscribed on rocks and pillars. Indian tradition recorded in various forms, combined with critical study of the monuments which have defied the ravenous tooth of time, enables the historian to fill in the outline of his picture with certain additional details. When all sources of information have been exhausted the result is a picture of astonishing completeness. The external political facts, although on record to a considerable extent, are known far less perfectly than the particulars of the internal government and administration.

**The revolution in Magadha.** The exact course of the events which led to the overthrow of the Nandas and the establishment

of the Mauryas in their royal seat is not fully ascertained. Many alleged incidents of the revolution in Magadha are depicted vividly in the ancient political drama entitled the 'Signet of Rākshasa' (*Mudrā-Rākshasa*), written, perhaps, in the fifth century after Christ. But it would be obviously unsafe to rely for a matter-of-fact historical narrative on a work of imagination composed some seven centuries after the events dramatized. The information gleaned from other authorities is scanty, and in some respects discrepant. It appears, however, to be certain that Chandra or Chandragupta, who when quite young had met Alexander in 326 or 325 B.C., was a scion of the Nanda stock. According to some accounts he was a son of the last Nanda king by a low-born woman. Acting under the guidance of his astute Brahman preceptor, Vishnugupta, better known by his patronymic Chānakya, or his surname Kautilya or Kautalya, Chandragupta, who had been exiled from Magadha, attacked the Macedonian officers in command of the garrisons in the Indus basin after Alexander's death, and destroyed them, with the aid of the northern nations. About the same time the youthful adventurer and his wily counsellor effected a revolution at Pātaliputra (Patna), the capital of the Magadhan monarchy, and exterminated the Nanda family. It is not clear whether the Magadhan revolution preceded or followed the attack on the Macedonian garrisons. However that may have been, Chandragupta undoubtedly succeeded to the throne of Pātaliputra, secured his position against all enemies, and established a gigantic empire. He is the first strictly historical person who can be properly described as emperor of India.

**Chronology.** Alexander having died at Babylon in June, 323 B.C., the news of his passing must have reached the Panjāb a month or two later. It may be assumed with safety that the campaign against the foreign garrisons began in the following cold season of 323 to 322, and we cannot be far wrong if we date Chandragupta's accession in 322 B.C. The Magadhan revolution seems to have occupied at least a year from beginning to end.<sup>1</sup> If it had been completed before Alexander's death, which is possible, the change of dynasty might be antedated to 325 B.C. The true date certainly lies between 325 and 320 inclusive, which is sufficiently precise for most purposes.

**War and peace with Seleukos.** Alexander not having left an heir capable of wielding his sceptre, his dominions were divided among his generals. The supreme power in Asia was disputed by Antigonos and Seleukos. After a long struggle the latter recovered Babylon in 312, and assumed the style of king six years later. He is known in history as Seleukos Nikator, the Conqueror, and is called King of Syria, but would be more accurately described as the King of Western Asia. Hoping to recover Alexander's

<sup>1</sup> Malayaketū, son of the king of the mountains, says:

Nine months have o'er us passed since that sad day

My father perished.

(*Mudrā-Rākshasa*, Act iv.)



Indian provinces, he crossed the Indus to attack the reigning Indian sovereign, Chandragupta Maurya. The invader was defeated, probably somewhere in the Panjāb, and compelled to retire beyond the frontier. The terms of peace involved the cession by Seleukos to Chandragupta of the provinces of the Paropanisadai, Aria, and Arachosia, the capitals of which were respectively Kābul, Herāt, and Kandahār, and also Gedrosia, the modern Balōchistan. The Indian king gave in exchange a comparatively small equivalent in the shape of five hundred elephants, which Seleukos needed for the wars with his western enemies. A matrimonial alliance also was arranged, which may be interpreted as meaning that a daughter of Seleukos was married to Chandragupta.

**Megasthenes.** The peace so concluded between Syria and India remained inviolate, and Seleukos, in or about the year 302 B. C., sent as his envoy to the court of Pātaliputra an officer named Megasthenes, who had served in Arachosia (Kandahār). The ambassador employed his leisure in compiling an excellent account of the geography, products, and institutions of India, which continued to be the principal authority on the subject until modern times. Unfortunately his book is no longer extant as a whole, but a great part of it has been preserved in the form of extracts made by other authors. Megasthenes is a thoroughly trustworthy witness concerning matters which came under his own observation. His work has been sometimes discredited unfairly because he permitted himself to embellish his text by the insertion of certain incredible marvels on hearsay testimony.

**Chandragupta's empire.** Little more than what has been stated is known concerning the political events of Chandragupta's reign, which lasted for twenty-four years. His dominions certainly included the country now called Afghanistan, the ancient Ariana, as far as the Hindu Kush range; the Panjāb; the territories now known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Bihār, and the peninsula of Kāthiāwār in the far west. Probably they also comprised Bengal. It is safe to affirm that Chandragupta, when his reign terminated about 298 B. C., was master of all India north of the Narbadā, as well as of Afghanistan. At present there is no good evidence that his conquests extended into the Deccan, but it is possible that he may have carried his victorious arms across the Narbadā. Late traditions in Mysore go so far as to assert the extension of the Nanda dominion to that country.

**Chandragupta's severity.** The Roman historian Justin, who affirms that Chandragupta was the author of India's liberty after Alexander's death, adds the comment that 'when he had gained the victory and ascended the throne, he transformed nominal liberty into slavery, inasmuch as he oppressed with servitude the people whom he had rescued from foreign rule'.

The known facts concerning his administration prove that he was a stern despot, who lived in daily fear of his life, and enforced strict order by a highly organized autocracy supported by punish-

ments of ruthless severity. All tradition agrees that the ship of state was steered with exceptional ability by his Brahman minister, whose writings show that his statecraft was not hampered by any moral scruples. The date or manner of the minister's disappearance from the scene is not recorded. According to the confused traditions collected in the seventeenth century by the Tibetan author Tāranāth, Chānakya continued to guide the counsels of Chandragupta's successor, Bindusāra. The statement may be well founded.<sup>1</sup>

**The fate of Chandragupta.** The only direct evidence throwing light on the manner in which the eventful reign of Chandragupta Maurya came to an end is that of Jain tradition. The Jains always treat the great emperor as having been a Jain like Bimbisāra, and no adequate reason seems to exist for discrediting their belief. The Jain religion undoubtedly was extremely influential in Magadha during the time of the later Saisunāgas, the Nandas, and the Mauryas. The fact that Chandragupta won the throne by the contrivance of a learned Brahman is not inconsistent with the supposition that Jainism was the royal faith. Jains habitually employ Brahmans for their domestic ceremonies, and in the drama cited above a Jain ascetic is mentioned as being a special friend of the minister Rākshasa, who served first the Nanda and then the new sovereign.

Once the fact that Chandragupta was or became a Jain is admitted, the tradition that he abdicated and committed suicide by slow starvation in the approved Jain manner becomes readily credible. The story is to the effect that when the Jain saint Bhadrabāhu predicted a famine in northern India which would last for twelve years, and the prophecy began to be fulfilled, the saint led twelve thousand Jains to the south in search of more favoured lands. King Chandragupta abdicated and accompanied the emigrants, who made their way to Sravana Belgola ('the white Jain tank') in Mysore, where Bhadrabāhu soon died. The ex-emperor Chandragupta, having survived him for twelve years, starved himself to death. The tradition is supported by the names of the buildings at Sravana Belgola, inscriptions from the seventh century after Christ, and a literary work of the tenth century. The evidence cannot be described as conclusive, but after much consideration I am disposed to accept the main facts as affirmed by tradition. It being certain that Chandragupta was quite young and inexperienced when he ascended the throne in or about 322 B. C., he must have been under fifty when his reign terminated twenty-four years later. His abdication is an adequate explanation of his disappearance at such an early age. Similar renunciations

<sup>1</sup> Wilford printed a story that the 'wicked minister' repented and retired to 'Shookul Teerth, near Broach, on the banks of the Nerbudda', where he died. Chandragupta is said to have accompanied Chānakya (*As. Res.*, ix. 96). One version of the story is said to be based on the *Agni Purāna*, and another on alleged traditions related by Wilford's Pundit. See *Rāmāidā*, i. 69 n.

of royal dignity are on record, and the twelve years' famine is not incredible. In short, the Jain tradition holds the field, and no alternative account exists.

**King Bindusāra.** Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusāra, whose title Amitraghāta, 'slayer of enemies', suggests a martial career. Unfortunately nothing definite is recorded concerning him except a trivial anecdote showing that he maintained friendly correspondence with Antiochos Soter, whose ambassador, Deimachos, replaced Megasthenes. An envoy named Dionysios sent by Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt (285-247 B.C.) to the court of Pātaliputra must have presented his credentials to either Bindusāra or his son Asoka. A tradition recorded by Tāranāth represents Bindusāra as having conquered the country between the eastern and the western seas. The tradition may well be founded on fact, because the immense extent of Asoka's empire is known, and he himself made no conquests except that of Kalinga. Asoka's dominion in the peninsula extended over the northern districts of Mysore, and it seems likely that the conquest of the Deccan was effected mostly by Bindusāra. But, as already remarked, it is possible that the southern extension of the empire may have been in part the work of Chandragupta, who certainly held the remote province of Kāthiāwār or Surāshtra in the west.

**Maurya organization.** The narrative of political events will now be interrupted to permit of a survey of the institutions of the Maurya empire according to the authorities above mentioned. Most of the arrangements adopted by Chandragupta remained in force during the reigns of his son and grandson. The modifications introduced by Asoka will be noticed in due course. The reader should understand that the Nanda kingdom of Magadha was strong, rich, extensive, protected by a numerous army, and no doubt administered on the system described in the *Arthashastra*. The enlargement of the kingdom into an empire did not necessarily involve radical changes in the administrative machinery, although it is reasonable to credit Chandragupta and his prime minister with effecting improvements and increasing the efficiency of the mechanism of government. The Maurya state was organized elaborately with a full supply of departments and carefully graded officials with well-defined duties. The accounts leave on my mind the impression that it was much better organized than was the Mogul empire under Akbar, as described in Abu-l Fazl's survey. Akbar's officials, except certain judicial functionaries, all ranked as military officers. Even the underlings in the imperial kitchen were rated and paid as foot soldiers. The bulk of the army was composed of irregular contingents supplied by either subordinate ruling chiefs or by high officials with territorial jurisdiction, and the standing army was quite small. The Mauryas, on the contrary, had a regular civil administration and maintained a huge standing army paid directly by the Crown—an instrument of power infinitely more efficient than Akbar's militia, which failed miserably when confronted with small Portuguese forces, whereas the Maurya

was more than a match for Seleukos. The control of the Maurya central government over distant provinces and subordinate officials appears to have been far more stringent than that exercised by Akbar, who did not possess the terrible secret service of his early predecessor. That service was worked very much on the lines followed by the modern German government and with an equal absence of scruple. The Maurya government, in short, was a highly organized and thoroughly efficient autocracy, capable of controlling an empire more extensive than that of Akbar as long as the sovereigns possessed the necessary personal ability. They were equal to the task for three generations. Although the figure of Bindusāra is shadowy, and absolutely nothing definite is known about his acts, he must have been a competent ruler. Otherwise he could not have reigned for a quarter of a century and transmitted to his son Asoka the gigantic empire created by and inherited from his father Chandragupta, probably enlarged by additions in the south.

**Pātaliputra, the capital.** Pātaliputra, Chandragupta's capital, was a great and noble city extending along the northern bank of the Sōn for about nine miles, with a depth of less than two miles. Much of the area is now covered by Patna, Bankipore, and sundry neighbouring villages. Kusumapura, the more ancient site, stood on the Ganges, and evidently became merged in Pātaliputra, for the two names are often used as synonyms. The Maurya city was built in the tongue of land formed by the junction of the Sōn with the Ganges, a defensible position recommended by the writers of text-books and frequently adopted by the ancient Indians in actual practice. Modern Patna no longer enjoys the strategical security of its predecessor, the confluence being now at the cantonment of Dinapore, about twelve miles above Patna. The old river beds and even the ancient embankments or quays may still be traced. The city was defended by a massive timber palisade, of which the remains have been found at several places. The gates were sixty-four, and the towers five hundred and seventy in number. The palisade was protected by a deep moat filled with water from the Sōn.

**The palace.** The imperial palace, which probably stood close to the modern village of Kumrahār, was chiefly constructed of timber, like the splendid regal edifices of Mandalay in Burma. Its gilded pillars were adorned with golden vines and silver birds, and a fine ornamental park studded with fish-ponds and well furnished with trees and shrubs served as setting for the edifices. Reasons exist for believing that the buildings were designed in imitation of the Persian palace at Persepolis, but the resemblance is not yet definitely established.

According to a Greek author the abode of Chandragupta excelled the palaces of Susa and Ekbatana in splendour, and there is no reason to doubt the truth of the statement. The court was maintained and served with barbaric ostentation. Gold vessels measuring six feet across are said to have been used. The king, when he appeared in public, was either carried in a golden palanquin or

mounted on an elephant with gorgeous trappings. He was clothed in fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold. The luxuries of all parts of Asia, including China, were at his disposal. Within the spacious precincts of the palace the sovereign relied for protection chiefly on his Amazonian bodyguard of armed women. It was considered lucky that when he got up in the morning he should be received by his female archers. The harem or women's quarters were on an extensive scale and carefully guarded. No commodities were allowed to pass in or out except under seal.

**Royal amusements.** Although the early<sup>\*</sup> Brahman writers repeatedly condemned hunting as a grave form of vice, and solemnly debated whether it or gambling should be considered the worse, the ancient kings indulged freely in the pleasures of the chase. Large game preserves were enclosed for the exclusive royal use, and the slightest interference with the sport of kings entailed instant capital punishment. The tradition of the sanctity of the imperial hunting-ground long survived. Jahāngir in the seventeenth century did not hesitate to kill or mutilate some unlucky men who had accidentally spoiled his shot at a blue bull. In England the Norman kings were equally tenacious of their sporting privileges. Asoka kept up the practice of hunting for many years, but abandoned it, as will be narrated presently, when he adopted Buddhist ideas. Chandragupta, who still followed the chase when Megasthenes was at his court late in his reign, is alleged to have been a Jain. It is not easy to understand how a Jain, even a king, could possibly hunt at any time. It may be that Chandragupta was a Brahmanical worshipper of Siva, or possibly, as Dr. Spooner thinks, a Magian, for the greater part of his reign, and that he was not converted to Jainism by Bhadrabāhu until almost the end.<sup>1</sup> Gladiatorial combats, such as even Akbar enjoyed watching, and the fights between animals, which may still be witnessed in the Native States, were included in the list of royal amusements. The races run with chariots, to each of which a mixed team of horses and oxen was harnessed, with horses in the centre and an ox at each side, were a curious kind of diversion. Such races are not to be seen nowadays in India, so far as I know, although good trotting oxen are still to be found. The course measured about 6,000 yards and the races were made the subject of keen betting.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arthasāstra* (Book II, chap. 4) prescribes that in the centre of the capital city shrines should be provided for Aparājita, Apratihata, Jayanta, Vijayanta, Siva, Vaisravaṇa (i. e. Kuvera), and the Asvins. The first four are Jain deities.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Coomaraswamy informs me that 'bull-racing' is a 'very common pastime in Ceylon, and creates immense excitement. The bulls are harnessed to the light cars called "hackeries"'. In 1679, when Dr. Fryer was at Surat, ox-races were still in favour. He describes them in his customary quaint fashion: 'The Coaches . . . Those for Journeying are something stronger than those for the Merchants to ride about the City or to take the Air on : which with their nimble Oxen they will, when they meet in

**Courtesan attendants.** Accomplished courtesans of the dancing-girl class enjoyed a privileged position at court, an evil practice continued by most Indian princes up to recent times, and perhaps, in some cases, to the present day. Such women were employed as housemaids, shampooers, and garland makers. They were entitled to present the king with water, perfumes, dress, and garlands. They held the royal umbrella, fan, and golden pitcher, and attended the sovereign when he was seated on his throne, or riding in a litter or chariot. They were subject to strict official control, and those who practised their profession paid licence fees to the treasury. Similar customs at Vijayanagar in the south are recorded in the sixteenth century. The secret service of the Maurya government did not disdain to make use of intelligence collected by the public women.

**Iranian influence.** Up to the time of Alexander's invasion the Indus was regarded as the traditional frontier of the Persian empire, although at that date the Great King does not seem to have actually asserted his authority over the Indian satrapy conquered in the time of Darius the son of Hystaspes. The proximity of the Panjāb to territory which was a Persian province for a century or more, and the constant although unrecorded intercourse which must have existed between the Achaemenian monarchy and the Indian kingdoms, cannot have failed to make Persian institutions familiar to the people of Hind. At a somewhat later date the continuance of strong Persian influence upon India is indicated by the prevalence of the Kharoshthi script, a variety of Aramaic, in the provinces near the frontier; by the long continued use of the Persian title of Satrap; by the form of the Asoka inscriptions; and by the architecture. Some small particulars which happen to be recorded are sufficient to show that in the time of the first Maurya emperor the court was affected by Iranian practices. The *Arthashastra* rule that the king, when consulting physicians and ascetics, should be seated 'in the room where the sacred fire has been kept' seems to be an indication that Magian ritual was honoured at the Maurya court. We are told also that the ceremonial washing of the king's hair was made the occasion of a splendid festival when the courtiers vied one with the other in offering rich presents to the king. That observance appears to be an obvious imitation of the Persian hair-washing ceremony on the sovereign's birthday, as described by Herodotus. Researches the fields, run races on, and contend for the Garland as much as for an Olympiak Prize: which is a Diversion To see a Cow gallop, as we say in scorn; but these not only pluck up their Heels apace, but are taught to amble, they often riding on them' (Fryer, *A New Account*, &c., ed. Crooke, Hakluyt Soc., 1915, vol. iii, pp. 157, 158). I have not found anywhere a notice of mixed teams of horses and oxen. The *Arthasāstra* (Book IV, chap. 20) provides official rules for gambling. Superintendents of gambling and betting collected the licence fee, and 5 per cent. of the winnings, as well as the charges for hire of the accessories and for water-supply and accommodation in gaming houses.

now in progress promise to reveal the existence of Magian influence on Indian religions and other institutions to a degree previously unsuspected, but I abstain from the discussion of doubtful hypotheses. The facts so far as disclosed suggest that the influence was Magian rather than Zoroastrian in the strict sense. The undoubted close relationship between Vedic religion and that of Irān must be borne in mind. Legendary accounts of the early connexion of Persia with India may be read in Firishta and other authors. Whatever may be the fate of the various hypotheses debated by scholars, there can be no doubt that ancient India was largely indebted to Iranian ideas and practices.<sup>1</sup>

**Autocracy.** The normal government of an Indian kingdom appears to have been always untempered autocracy or despotism.<sup>2</sup> The royal will was not controlled by any law, and the customary respect shown to Brahmanas was an ineffective check upon a sovereign resolved to have his own way. According to the *Arthashastra* a Brahman convicted of ordinary heinous crime, murder included, was exempt from torture, and should be either banished or sentenced to the mines for life. But the author expressly authorizes the execution by drowning of a Brahman guilty of high treason, whereas other traitors were to be burnt alive. A strong, tyrannous man like Chandragupta would not have allowed himself to be hampered by nice regard for Brahman privileges. The sovereign was not bound to consult anybody, but in practice the most self-willed despot is obliged to depend largely upon his ministers. 'Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence he [the king] shall employ ministers and hear their opinion.'<sup>3</sup> The Maurya monarch, according to the ruling of Chānakya, was not constrained to limit his Privy Council to any particular number of ministers. The Council should 'consist of as many members as the needs of his dominion require'. The sovereign was recommended to be content with the advice of not more than four ministers on any given matter. In any case the decision rested with him alone. Akbar in the sixteenth century, although it is unlikely that he had ever heard of Chānakya or his treatise, acted on the principles laid down in that work so far as his relations with his ministers were concerned.

**The only real check.** The only real check upon the arbitrary royal authority was the ever-present fear of revolution and assassination. A king who trampled on custom and overstrained his power was apt to come to an untimely end. Chandragupta, who had won the throne by rebellion and the extermination of his prede-

<sup>1</sup> The Ionic Jandiala temple in the Sir Kap section of Taxila appears to have been a fire-temple (*J. P. H. S.*, iii. 77; *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, 1912-13, p. 35, pl. xxxiv, b). It dates from about the beginning of the Christian era.

<sup>2</sup> The text refers only to monarchical governments; and not to the tribal republics or oligarchies, such as those of the Mālavas, Kshudrakas, Lichchavis, and Yaudhēyas.

<sup>3</sup> *Arthashastra*, Book I, chap. 7.



cessor's family, naturally led an uneasy life, and was obliged to take unceasing precautions against conspiracies. He dared not incur the risk either of sleeping in the day-time or occupying the same bedroom two nights in succession. A king of Burma at the beginning of the nineteenth century is recorded to have taken similar precautions. The dramatist already cited, who tells the traditional story of the revolution which overthrew the Nandas, gives a vivid account of the varied expedients by which the adherents of the old dynasty sought to destroy the young usurper, and how all failed, so that the disappointed ex-minister exclaims :

'Tis ever thus.—Fortune in all befriends  
The cruel Chandragupta. When I send  
A messenger of certain death to slay him,  
She wields the instrument against his rival,  
Who should have spoiled him of one-half his kingdom ;  
And arms, and drugs, and stratagems are turned  
In his behalf against my friends and servants ;  
So that whate'er I plot against his power  
Serves but to yield him unexpected profit.

The usurper's powerful military force, which will be now described, secured him in possession of his dangerous throne.

**The normal Indian army.** An Indian army, in accordance with immemorial tradition, comprised four 'arms'—namely elephants, chariots, cavalry, and infantry. The war-elephants were regarded as the most important because

'the victory of Kings depends mainly upon elephants; for elephants, being of large bodily frame, are able not only to destroy the arrayed army of an enemy, his fortifications, and encampments, but also to undertake works that are dangerous to life'.

The high value thus set upon elephants, justified by the conditions and experience of purely Indian warfare, was discredited when a bold European general like Alexander confounded the traditional Indian tactics by novel methods of attack.

Chariots, which had been in use in Rigvedic times, played an important part in ancient Indian warfare for many centuries. It is not known with certainty when or why they went out of fashion. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, writing in the middle of the seventh century, when giving a general description of India, states that the army was composed of the four divisions or 'arms' above mentioned, and remarks that officers used to ride in chariots.

'The army is composed of Foot, Horse, Chariot, and Elephant soldiers. The war-elephant is covered with coat-of-mail, and his tusks are provided with sharp barbs. On him rides the Commander-in-Chief, who has a soldier on each side to manage the elephant. The chariot in which an officer sits is drawn by four horses, whilst infantry guard it on both sides.'

Apparently at that time chariots were used by officers only.

The same author, when describing the army organized by his

<sup>1</sup> Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, vol. i, p. 171. The translation by Beal (*Records*, i. 88) differs materially and appears to be erroneous.



contemporary, Harsha of Kanauj, credits that powerful king with possessing originally 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry, and 50,000 foot. After some years he is said to have increased his war elephants to 60,000, and his cavalry to 100,000.<sup>1</sup> No mention of chariots is made. It is legitimate to infer that the use of chariots was obsolescent in the pilgrim's time, and did not survive the seventh century. I do not know of any subsequent mention of their employment in warfare.



Four-horsed chariot of sun.

**The Maurya army.** Chandragupta maintained the traditional 'four-fold' army. His military organization does not betray any trace of Greek ideas. The force at the command of the last Nanda was formidable, being estimated at 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 chariots, and 6,000 fighting elephants. The Maurya raised the numbers of the infantry to 600,000, and of the elephants to 9,000. But his cavalry is said to have mustered only 30,000. The number of his chariots is not recorded. Assuming that he maintained them as in the time of his predecessor, that each chariot required at least three, and that each elephant carried at least four men, his total force must have amounted to not less than 690,000, or in round numbers 700,000 men. Megasthenes expressly states that the soldiers were paid and equipped by the state. They were not a mere militia of contingents. It is not surprising that an army so strong was able both to 'overrun and subdue all India', as Plutarch asserts, and also to defeat the invasion of Seleukos, whose force must have been far inferior in numbers. According to the *Arthashastra* an Indian army was organized in

<sup>1</sup> Watters summarizes the passage, omitting details. Beal (i. 213) accidentally gives 2,000 as being Harsha's original cavalry force. Julien clearly is right in stating 20,000 as the number.

squads of ten men, companies of a hundred, and battalions of a thousand each. Chandragupta probably followed the same practice. The author of the treatise, who contemplated India as being divided in the normal manner into a multitude of small states, does not describe the constitution of the empire which he did so much to establish. He therefore treats the Rājā as the Commander-in-Chief of the army, and betrays no knowledge of any professional head-quarters organization. But Megasthenes informs us that Chandragupta's host was controlled and administered under the direction of a War Office elaborately constituted. A commission of thirty members was divided into six Boards (*panchayats*), each with five members, and severally charged with the administration of the following departments, namely: Board No. I (in conjunction with the admiral), Admiralty; Board No. II, Transport, Commissariat, and Army Service; Board No. III, Infantry; Board No. IV, Cavalry; Board No. V, War-chariots; and Board No. VI, Elephants.

No similar organization is recorded elsewhere, and the credit of devising such efficient machinery must be divided between Chandragupta and his exceptionally able minister.

**Equipment.** The equipment of the army was effective and adequate. A fighting elephant carried at least three archers besides the driver. The chariots usually were four-horsed, but two-horsed cars also were in use. Each chariot had at least two fighting men in addition to the driver. Six men formed the complement of each of the four-horsed chariots employed by Pōros at the battle of the Hydaspes. Each horseman was armed with two lances resembling the Greek *saunia*, and was protected by a buckler. The principal weapon of the infantry was a straight broadsword suspended by a belt from the shoulder.<sup>1</sup> Javelins and



BOYS ARMED AS SOLDIERS.

<sup>1</sup> Col. Hendley noted that many Rājapūts in recent times carried the sword in the same way (*J. I. A.*, No. 180, 1915, p. 8).

bows and arrows were additional arms. The arrow was discharged with the aid of pressure from the left foot on the extremity of the bow resting on the ground, and with such force that neither shield nor breastplate could withstand it. At the Hydaspes the



Veddah bow.

Indian archers were rendered ineffective by the greasy condition of the ground which prevented the soldier from securing a firm rest for the end of his bow.<sup>1</sup>

Defensive armour was supplied to men, elephants, and horses.

The transport animals included horses, mules, and oxen.

According to Chānakya, an ambulance service was provided in the rear during an action consisting of surgeons supplied with instruments, medicines, and dressings, and of women with prepared food and beverages (Book X, chap. 3).

It is clear, therefore, that the army, as improved by Chandragupta, was extremely formidable.

**Diplomacy and force.** But the Maurya did not rely solely on his armed strength. Indian statesmen have always shown a leaning towards the employment of diplomacy in preference to force. The dictum of Chānakya that 'intrigue, spies, winning over the enemy's people, siege, and assault are the five means to capture a fort,' is characteristic, and indicates the nature of the subsidiary means employed to create the Maurya empire. Long afterwards, Akbar was content to secure by bribery the fortress of Asirgarh, which his arms were unable to reduce, and Aurangzēb gained possession of Marāthā forts usually by the same ignoble means. The writers of text-books debated the relative value of force and diplomacy. The author of the *Arthashastra* had no hesitation in deciding that 'skill in intrigue (or "diplomacy") is better', because the crafty intriguer can always overthrow kings who are superior in warlike spirit and power (Book IX, chap. 1).

Similarly, Machiavelli was prepared to prove by many examples that the prince who 'best personated the fox had the better success'.<sup>2</sup> The theory of politics expounded in the *Arthashastra* is substantially identical with that of *The Prince*.

**Bāna's criticism of Kautilya or Chānakya.** It is right to add that the cynical principles of the *Arthashastra*, worked out 'on ground cleared of the hindrances of private justice', did not meet with universal acceptance. King Harsha's friend Bāna in the seventh century regarded them with horror:

<sup>1</sup> Compare the Veddah method as illustrated from Tennent, *Ceylon*,<sup>2</sup> vol. i, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *The Prince*, transl. in Universal Library ed., Routledge, 1893, p. 110.

'Is there anything', he exclaims, 'that is righteous for those for whom the science of Kautilya, merciless in its precepts, rich in cruelty, is an authority; whose teachers are priests habitually hard-hearted with practice of witchcraft; to whom ministers, always inclined to deceive others, are councillors; whose desire is always for the goddess of wealth that has been cast away by thousands of kings; who are devoted to the application of destructive sciences; and to whom brothers, affectionate with natural cordial love, are fit victims to be murdered?'

The treatise criticized having been written avowedly 'for the benefit of the Maurya', we may feel assured that Bāna's scruples were not shared by Chandragupta, who evidently acted, as Justin indicates, in accordance with the principles of his preceptor. The late conversion of the first Maurya emperor to the merciful creed of Jainism, if it be a fact, as I think it was, may be ascribed to a revulsion of conscience from the hateful teaching of the Atharvan Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

**Severity of the government.** Whatever we may think about the principles of Chandragupta, his masterful government was effective. The text-books define the art of governing as *dandanīti*, 'the science of punishment'. The details preserved show clearly that that definition was accepted heartily by Chandragupta, who acted on it without hesitation. Whether we consult the *Arthashastra* or the Greek authorities we receive the same impression of ruthless severity in the enforcement of fiscal regulations for the benefit of the treasury, and of stern repression of crime. Megasthenes noted that while he resided in the imperial camp with a population of 400,000 people the daily thefts reported did not exceed 200 drachmae in value, equivalent to about eight pounds sterling. Such security of property was attained by the application of a terribly severe code, based, as Chānakya observes, on the precepts laid down 'in the scriptures of great sages'. When we come to the history of the purely Hindu empire of Vijayanagar in the sixteenth century we shall find that property in that realm was protected by the most appalling penalties for even petty thefts.

**Torture.** A person in the Maurya dominion accused of theft and arrested within three days after the commission of the crime was ordinarily (with certain exceptions) subjected to torture in order to elicit a confession, unless he could prove either an alibi or enmity on the part of the complainant. Although the author of the *Arthashastra* was fully aware of the danger of eliciting false confessions by torture and insists on the necessity for the production of conclusive evidence, it seems clear that the police must have relied chiefly on the use of torture. The general principle is

<sup>1</sup> Many passages in the *Arthashastra* prove that the author was an admirer of the *Atharva*, the Veda of magic and spells. Book XIV, entitled 'Secret Means', treats of weird sorceries supposed to compass the destruction of an enemy.

laid down that 'those whose guilt is believed to be true shall be subjected to torture'. In the face of such a comprehensive rule exceptions would have had little practical effect. All experienced magistrates, among whom the author of this book may be included, know how deeply the tradition of torturing a prisoner in order to extort a confession, true or false, is engrained in the mind of every Indian policeman and how difficult it is to check the practice even under modern conditions. The author of the *Arthashastra* gives a horrible list of eighteen kinds of torture, remarking calmly that 'each day a fresh kind of the torture may be employed', and that in certain aggravated cases, by special order, the prisoner might be 'subjected once or many times to one or all of the above kinds of torture'.

When the prisoner had been convicted, the modes of punishment were many, including fines, mutilation, and death in various forms, with or without torment.

Mutilation could sometimes be compounded for by a fine. The caste and rank of the offender were taken into consideration. A Brahman could not be tortured, but might be branded, exiled, or sent to the mines for life. The authorities were instructed to take notice of 'equitable distinctions among offenders, whether belonging to the royal family or to the common people'.

Theft to the value of 40 or 50 silver *panas* (probably nearly equivalent to shillings) was punishable with death.

Among other capital offences were homicide, housebreaking, breaching the dam of a tank, and damage to royal property, with many more. Megasthenes notes that death was the penalty for injury to an artisan in the royal employment, and that even evasion of the municipal tithe on goods sold was punished in the same drastic fashion.

There is no reason to suppose that the severity of the criminal code was seriously modified under the Buddhist government of Asoka. His Censors were specially charged to deal with cases of unjust imprisonment or corporal punishment, and prisoners lying under sentence of death are mentioned.

The *Arthashastra* prescribes the modest fine of only 48 *panas* on the superintendent of a jail for inflicting unjust torture; and even if he beat a prisoner to death he was merely to be fined 1,000 *panas*. Asoka's institution of Censors may, perhaps, have rendered the redress of such wrongs somewhat easier than it can have been in the time of his grandfather; but it is always difficult to detect or punish the misdoings of officials.

**Town prefect and census.** The author of the *Arthashastra* contemplated the division of a normal small kingdom into four provinces, each administered by a governor. He applied the same principle to the administration of the capital city, and presumably to that of other large towns. The capital was divided into four quarters or wards, each in charge of a sub-prefect (*sthānika*), who was assisted by subordinates (*gopa*), each responsible for from ten to forty households. The whole city was administered by a prefect

(*nāgaraka*), whose duties resembled those of the *kotwal* in later times.

The town authorities were expected to know everything about everybody within their jurisdiction, and to keep a sharp watch upon all comings and goings. The official activities included the maintenance of a permanent census, the *gopa* being required to 'know not only the caste, *gotra* [caste sub-division], the name, and occupation of both men and women in the households of his block, but also to ascertain their income and expenditure'. Such inquisitorial registration enormously enhanced the power of the central government for taxation and all purposes.

Precautions against fire and simple sanitary regulations were enforced. A person who intentionally set fire to a house was to be thrown into the same fire.

**Maurya municipal commission.** Chandragupta's municipal organization for his huge imperial capital was more complex. He provided a commission of thirty members, divided like that for the War Office, into six Boards or Committees. The Commissioners in their collective capacity had charge, in addition to their special departments, of all matters concerning the public welfare, including the repairs of public works, the maintenance of markets, harbours, and temples, and the regulation of prices. The departmental functions of the six Boards or Committees were as follows: (1) industrial arts; (2) care of foreigners; (3) registration of births and deaths; (4) retail trade and barter, with supervision of weights and measures, and the due stamping of produce sold; (5) supervision of manufactures and sale of the same duly stamped; and (6) collection of the tithe on the price of goods sold.

The perfection of the arrangements thus indicated is astonishing, even when exhibited in outline. Examination of the departmental details increases our wonder that such an organization could have been planned and efficiently operated in India in 300 B.C. Akbar had nothing like it, and it may be doubted if any of the ancient Greek cities were better organized.

**Board No. 1; arts.** Artisans were regarded as being devoted in a special manner to the royal service, and capital punishment was inflicted on any person who impaired the efficiency of a craftsman by causing the loss of a hand or eye. Board No. 1 no doubt regulated wages, enforced the use of pure and sound materials, and exacted a full tale of work in exchange for the proper wage. The subject might be illustrated at length from the rules of the *Arthasāstra* concerning the duties of departmental officers as described in that work, and from the practice of later ages, but it is impossible here to follow out the details.

**Board No. 2; foreigners.** Board No. 2 performed duties which in modern times are entrusted to consuls and in ancient Greece were carried out by the officers called *proxenoi* (πρόξενoi). The members of the Board were required to find lodgings for foreigners, to keep them under observation, to escort them out of the country; and in case of sickness or death to provide for

the treatment or burial of the stranger, whose property they were obliged to protect and account for. The existence of such officials and regulations affords conclusive proof that the Maurya empire was in constant intercourse with foreign states and that many strangers visited the capital on business.

**Board No. 3; births and deaths.** The registration of births and deaths was expressly designed both to facilitate taxation, probably a poll-tax of so much per head, and for the information of the government. It was a development and necessary consequence of the register or permanent census described in the *Arthashastra*. It may be assumed that the exceptionally efficient government of Chandragupta introduced improvements on the arrangements of his predecessors.

**Boards 4-6; trade and tolls.** It has always been the practice of Indian rulers to exercise strict supervision over private trade and to levy duties on sales, the goods being stamped officially to guarantee payment. Manufactures were treated on the same principles. Procedure in such matters varied so little in India from age to age that the best comment on the statement of Megasthenes is afforded by an extract from the travels of Tavernier, the French jeweller who journeyed through India on business in the seventeenth century. He states that at Benares there were

'two galleries where they sell cottons, silken stuffs, and other kinds of merchandise. The majority of those who vend the goods are the workers who have made the pieces, and in this manner foreigners obtain them at first hand. These workers, before exposing anything for sale, have to go to him who holds the contract [*scil.* for collecting the tax on sales], in order to get the king's stamp impressed on the pieces of calico or silk, otherwise they are fined and flogged.'

The stamp usually was impressed in vermillion. It is called 'identity-stamp' (*abhiyana-mudra*) by Chānakya, and is the *σφραγίς* of the Greek accounts.<sup>1</sup> False statements made by importers or vendors were punishable as theft, that is to say, by fine, mutilation, or even death. Evasion of the municipal tithe collected by the sixth Board was specially made a capital offence, as already noted.

Full particulars of the methods of collection of duties on sales and manufactures will be found in the *Arthashastra*, and some indication of the nature of Indian trade in the fourth century B. C. has been given in the account of the Nanda dynasty.

**Viceroy.** We have seen that according to the *Arthashastra* the normal small kingdom described in that book should be divided into four provinces, each under a governor (*sthānika*). We do not know positively how many viceroys were required for Chandragupta's immense empire extending from the Hindu Kush to at least as far as the Narbadā, but it is noticeable that four viceroys seem to have sufficed for the still larger empire of Asoka. They will be mentioned more particularly in the history of his reign.

<sup>1</sup> McCrindle repeatedly mistranslated the words *and σφραγίς* as meaning 'by public notice'.



**Departments.** The *Arthashastra* describes in much detail the duties of the heads of the numerous departments in the administration of a properly regulated Hindu state. The book refers to about thirty such departments. The Greek accounts prove that the departmental organization was maintained by Chandragupta. We hear specifically of officers in charge of markets, rivers, canal irrigation, public works, and sundry branches of fiscal business, besides the superintendents of hunters, wood-cutters, blacksmiths, carpenters, and miners. Innumerable details might be filled in from the *Arthashastra*, but limitations of space permit notice of only a few selected topics.

**Official corruption.** In spite of the drastic penal code and the enhanced severities visited upon offending officials the public service suffered from corruption. The experienced minister records his opinion that

just as it is impossible not to taste the honey or the poison that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government servant not to eat up, at least, a bit of the King's revenue. Just as with fish moving under water it cannot possibly be discerned whether they are drinking water or not, so it is impossible to detect government servants employed on official duties when helping themselves to money. It is possible to mark the movements of birds flying high up in the sky; but it is not possible to ascertain the secret movements of government servants.'

'There are', the same authority observes, 'about forty ways of embezzlement; what is realized earlier is entered later on; what is realized later is entered earlier; what ought to be realized is not realized;' and so on through the whole list.

Rewards were promised to informers who disclosed cases of defalcation; but, on the other hand, the informer who failed to prove his charges was liable to severe punishment, which might be capital.

**Secret service.** The secret service to which reference has been made may be described as the mainstay of the government, next to the army. The king employed hosts of spies or detectives, masquerading in disguises of all kinds, who were controlled by an espionage bureau, as in modern Germany. Cipher writing was used and the services of carrier pigeons were enlisted. The doctrine of the necessity for constant espionage in every branch of the administration pervades the whole of the *Arthashastra*, which treats every form of villany as legitimate when employed in the business of the state. The evidence of Chanakya's treatise is corroborated by the Greek testimony. News writers at the headquarters of provincial administrations supplied secret reports to the government, and the information obtained from courtesans was not despised. We are told that the king, having set up spies over his ministers, 'shall proceed to espy both citizens and country people'. The drama already cited more than once exhibits the system at work.

**Property in land.** The question whether or not private property in land existed in ancient India has been often debated, but



without any satisfactory result, by reason of the ambiguity lurking in the term property. The disputants who affirm the existence of private property in land use the term in one sense and their opponents in another. The clearest example of absolute private property in land, apparently closely resembling the English freehold, is to be found in Malabar, the home of the Nāyars (Nairs), Coorgs, and Tulus, whom Dubois regarded as the three aboriginal tribes of the western coast. He expressed the opinion that Malabar 'is the only province in India where proprietary right has been preserved intact until the present day. Everywhere else the soil belongs to the ruler, and the cultivator is merely his tenant.'

The Abbé then proceeds to explain at considerable length exactly what he means.<sup>1</sup>

The proposition enunciated by Dubois that 'everywhere else the soil belongs to the ruler' has been generally accepted in northern and western India, and is now, as Baden-Powell testifies, the doctrine current in the Native States.

The commentator on the *Arthashastra* (Book II, chap. 24) had no doubt on the subject. He declares that 'those who are well versed in the scriptures admit that the King is the owner of both land and water, and that the people can exercise their right of ownership over all other things excepting these two'. The author of the treatise, as a whole, seems to accept that view. The rules in chapter 1 of Book II, for instance, instruct the king that 'lands prepared for cultivation shall be given to tax-payers (*karada*) only for life (*ekapurushikāni*)'; and that 'lands may be confiscated from those who do not cultivate them, and given to others'. The author evidently held that land of all kinds was at the disposal of the government. Most native Indian governments, including those of the Muhammadan dynasties, have taken in the shape of land revenue and cesses so large a proportion of the produce that the actual cultivator was left at most a bare subsistence. The government share, it is true, was always limited theoretically, but in practice the state usually took all it could extort. In those circumstances no room was left for economic rent, or for a landlord class receiving rent. Nothing intervened between the poverty-stricken peasant and the state. Ordinarily the peasant's customary right to retain his land as long as he paid all official demands was respected, but his ill-defined right of occupancy, which was not protected by positive law, differed widely from ownership. In the Bombay Presidency, where the State still deals directly with the cultivating peasant or 'ryot', the ownership of the government is expressly recognized by law.

In Bengal and the Upper Provinces the British authorities have gone out of their way to develop, or even to create a class of rent-receiving landlords, whose rights are often described as amounting

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Manners, &c.*, ed. Beauchamp, 3rd ed. (1906), p. 56. See *The Travancore State Manual*, Trivandrum, 1906, for the theory and details of the Malabar 'birth-right' tenure.

to full ownership. But in the background there is always the lien of the State on the soil to enforce the punctual payment of the land revenue, that is to say, the cash commutation for the share of the produce to which every Indian government is entitled by immemorial tradition. The so-called 'ownership' was in former times and still is also subject to the customary rights of subordinate tenure-holders and of the cultivating peasants; those rights being substantial, although undefined by law and inadequately secured before the middle of the nineteenth century.

**Land revenue.** The land revenue, or State share of the produce, which always has been the mainstay of Indian finance, may be regarded as rent rather than as taxation on the assumption that the ultimate property in land is vested in the State. The normal share of the produce admitted to be claimable by the government was one-fourth. But Akbar took one-third, and the Sultans of Kashmir claimed one-half. The nominal percentage of land revenue to the produce did not much matter, because the government usually made up for any deficiency by exacting a multitude of extra periodical cesses, not to speak of occasional forced contributions. The ordinary result was that the peasant might consider himself lucky if he was left enough to fill tolerably the stomachs of himself and family and to provide seed. Nothing was available for the payment of rent to a private landlord.

In Anglo-Indian official phraseology the term 'settlement', a translation of the Persian word *bandobast*, is applied to the whole process by which the amount of the land revenue or crown-rent is assessed, and the officer who carries out the operations is called a 'settlement officer'. The authorities do not explain the nature of the 'settlements' made in Maurya times, and we do not know whether the assessment was varied yearly or fixed for longer periods.

**Irrigation.** Irrigation, which is essential in most parts of India for the security of the crops and consequently of the revenue, received close attention, and was under the supervision of departmental officers. A system of canals with sluices was maintained, and water-rates of varying amounts were levied as they are now.

**Roads.** The main roads were kept in order by the proper department, and pillars marking the distances, equivalent to our milestones and the Mogul *kōs minars*, were set up at intervals of ten *stadia*, or about 2,022½ English yards, half a *kōs* by Indian reckoning. The Mogul emperors were content with a pillar for each *kōs*. A great highway, now represented by Lord Dalhousie's Grand Trunk Road, connected Taxila and the north-western frontier with Pataliputra, the capital. The *Arthashastra* mentions the construction of roads as one of the duties of a king. Rules were laid down concerning the correct width of each class of road.

**Liquor.** The drinking of and traffic in liquor were recognized officially and encouraged as a source of revenue. The whole business was under the control of a Superintendent, who was responsible for the necessary police and licensing arrangements, as well as

for the collection of the government dues. Public-houses or drinking-shops were not to be close together, and the consumption, whether on or off the premises, was duly regulated. The shops were to be made attractive by the provision of seats, couches, scents, garlands, water, and other comforts suitable to the varying seasons. Chānakya mentions six principal kinds of liquor. Special licences for manufacture were granted for a term of four days on the occasions of festivals, fairs, and pilgrimages.

**General observations.** It is impossible to reproduce in a reasonable space nearly all the information on record concerning the institutions of Chandragupta Maurya and his immediate predecessors. The particulars recounted in the foregoing pages may suffice to give the modern student a fairly accurate and vivid notion of the nature of the civilization of northern India at the close of the fourth century B. C. Many readers probably will be surprised to learn of the existence at such an early date of a government so thoroughly organized, which anticipated in many respects the institutions of modern times. The dark spots on the picture are the appalling wickedness of the statecraft taught in the *Arthashastra* and the hateful espionage which tainted the whole administration and was inspired by the wicked statecraft of the books. The policy inculcated by Kautilya or Chānakya was not the invention of that unscrupulous minister. The book attributed to him on substantial grounds is avowedly founded upon many earlier treatises no longer extant, all of which seem to have advocated the same principles. The author of the *Arthashastra*, while frequently disagreeing with his predecessors concerning details, clearly was in general agreement with them concerning the policy to be pursued. Attention has been drawn to the emphatic repudiation of the *Arthashastra* doctrines by Bāna in the seventh century after Christ. He does not stand quite alone, although it might be difficult to cite any passage exactly similar from other authors. The spirit of the *Dharmasastras* is far more humane than that of Chānakya's ruthless treatise, and the story of Rāma, whether told in Sanskrit or Hindi, is that of a noble prince. Kāmandaka, on the other hand, describes the author of the *Arthashastra* as 'wise and Brahma (god)-like'; and Dandi calls him 'a revered teacher'.

How did the atrocious policy taught in the books of the *Arthashastra* class originate and gain wide acceptance? The minister professes to write in accordance with the 'customs of the Āryas', and to revere the 'triple Veda', but his practical advice, so far as it has a Vedic foundation, is based on the fourth Veda, the *Atharva*, a storehouse of sorcery and spells. The question which I have asked suggests curious speculations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 'triple Veda' (*trayi*) is defined as comprising the 'Sāma, Rik, and Yajus'. The order of enumeration is noteworthy. The author, when specifying the 'four sciences', places first *Anvikshakti* or philosophy (comprising *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, and *Lokāyata*); and assigns the 'triple Veda' to the second place. The third science called *Vāra* deals with the practical affairs of common life, namely, agriculture, cattle-breeding,

## AUTHORITIES

Most of the necessary references will be found in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1914. The revised version of the *Arthasāstra* by R. SHAMASASTRY (SHAMA SASTRI) is now conveniently available in an octavo volume published at Bangalore Government Press in 1915. A considerable literature of books and essays is growing up round the text of the *Arthasāstra*, which came to light in 1905. The most important treatise subsequent to the publication of *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> is *Public Administration in Ancient India* by PRAMATHANATHA BANERJEA (Macmillan, 1916); a learned and accurate work, although the author's notion that the Maurya monarchy was 'limited' (p. 50) or 'constitutional' (p. 51) is not tenable. *Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity*, vol. i, by NARENDRA NATH LAW, with a good introduction by Professor Radhakumud Mookerji, is also useful (Longmans, 1914). The *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, Book I, by Professor BENAY KUMAR SARKAR (Pānini Office, Allahabad, 1914), may be consulted with advantage on certain matters, notwithstanding its cumbersome title.

Many parts of the *Arthasāstra* still remain obscure, and the treatise must become the subject of much more discussion from various points of view.

## CHAPTER 2

Asoka Maurya and his institutions; diffusion of Buddhism; end of the Maurya dynasty; the successors of the Mauryas.

**Accession of Asoka.** When the reign of Bindusāra terminated in 273 B. C. he was succeeded by one of his sons named Asokavardhana, commonly called Asoka, who seems to have been selected by his father as heir apparent, and possibly may have enjoyed for some time the rank of sub-king or *uparāja*. According to tradition he had served as Viceroy, first at Taxila in the north-west, and subsequently at Ujjain in Mālwa. The fact that his formal consecration or coronation (*abhisheka*) was delayed for some four years until 269 B. C. confirms the tradition that his succession was contested, and it may be true that his rival was an elder brother named Susīma, as affirmed by one of the many wild legends which have gathered round Asoka's name. The story told by the monks of Ceylon that he slaughtered 98 or 99 brothers in order to clear his way to the throne is absurd and false; the fact being, as the inscriptions prove, that Asoka took good care of his brothers and sisters long after his succession. The grotesque tales about Asoka's alleged abnormal wickedness prior to his conversion to Buddhism, which were current in the north as well as the south, are equally baseless and obviously concocted for purposes of edification.

and trade; the fourth, styled alternatively *Arthasāstra* or *Dandanīti*, is the subject of his treatise. 'This *Arthasāstra*', he says in his opening sentence, 'is made as a compendium of almost all the *Arthasāstras*, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed by ancient teachers.' See Book I, chaps. 1-4, and the concluding chapter of the work.

**Authorities.** The monkish legends, whether of Ceylon or other countries, do not afford a safe basis for a matter-of-fact history of the great Buddhist emperor, although some of the Ceylon dates seem to be correct, while others are erroneous. The only sound foundation for his history is to be found in his numerous and wonderful inscriptions, which may be fairly considered the most remarkable set of inscriptions in the world. Their testimony is supplemented by that of a few other epigraphs, by literary tradition in many forms and languages, and by inferences deduced from study of the extant monuments and their distribution. The coins of Asoka's age, which do not bear his name or titles, are of little use to the historian. The *Arthashastra* and certain other books in various languages provide materials for illustrative comment on the narrative.

**Little political activity.** Asoka having been a man of peace for the greater part of his long reign, the recorded political events during it are few, and nothing is known about his military force. The interest of the story is centred on the movement initiated by him which transformed Buddhism from a local sect into one of the world-religions and on the gradual development of the emperor's personal character and policy. His imperishable records constitute in large measure his autobiography written in terms manifestly dictated by himself.

Asoka waged only one war of aggression, that directed to the acquisition of Kalinga on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. His gigantic empire, which extended from the Hindu Kush to the northern districts of Mysore, consequently must have been inherited, with the exception of Kalinga, from his father, and must have been acquired either by Bindusāra or by Chandragupta, or by both.

**Chronology.** His inscriptions date the events of the reign by regnal years reckoned from the time of his consecration or coronation in 269 B. C. The month in which that ceremony took place not being known, it is impossible to equate accurately the regnal with the calendar years. Nor is it practicable to define the dates B. C. with absolute precision for various reasons. Two of the chief of those reasons are that the exact year of Chandragupta's accession is not ascertainable, and that the length of Bindusāra's reign is variously stated as either twenty-five or twenty-eight years. For convenience dates will be given in this chapter as if they were precise, but the reader is invited to bear in mind that they are subject to slight correction for possible error, probably not exceeding two years. Asoka's reign, as counted from his father's death, extended to forty or forty-one years; or, as counted from his consecration, to thirty-six or thirty-seven years. The dated inscriptions begin in the ninth and come down to the twenty-eighth regnal year, equivalent approximately to the period including 261 and 242 B. C. The reign is taken as extending from 273 to 232 B. C.

**Asoka's early years.** No definite political event can be assigned to the early years of Asoka's government. His personal

reminiscences prove that he then lived the life of his predecessors, consuming flesh food freely, enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and encouraging festive assemblies accompanied by dancing and drinking. No sound reason exists for believing that his conduct was particularly sinful or vicious. The nature of his diet and amusements in those days affords conclusive evidence that he cannot have been a follower of the Jain religion. It may be presumed that he was a Brahmanical Hindu, and most likely a worshipper of Siva. His religious cult or ceremonial possibly may have been affected by Magian practices of Iranian origin, but it is not probable that he was a professed Zoroastrian. The sudden change in his beliefs and habits was produced by the remorse which he felt for the unmerited sorrows inflicted upon the people of the kingdom of Kalinga in the east by his attack on and annexation of that country in 261 B. C.

**The Kalinga war.** The Kalinga war, which was the turning point in Asoka's career, thus became one of the decisive events in the history of the world. The miseries of the campaign, the sufferings of the prisoners, and the wailings for the dead were soon forgotten by the vanquished, as they have been forgotten by other conquered nations after thousands of wars; but the effect which they produced upon the conscience of the victor is still traceable in the world of the twentieth century.

Asoka himself tells us in the striking language of his longest Rock Edict (No. XIII) how he was haunted by remorse for the calamities caused by his ambition, and was driven to take refuge in the Law of Piety or Duty, which he identifies elsewhere with the doctrine of the Buddha.

'Kalinga was conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty when he had been consecrated eight years [261 B. C.]. 150,000 persons were thence carried away captive, 100,000 were there slain, and many times that number perished.'

Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Duty, his love of that Law, and his giving instruction in that Law (*dharma*). Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty.'

The royal author proceeds to develop in detail the sentiment above expressed in general terms, and continues:

'Thus, of all the people who were then slain, done to death, or carried away captive in the Kalingas, if the hundredth or the thousandth part were to suffer the same fate, it would now be matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty. Moreover, should any one do him wrong, that too must be borne with by His Sacred Majesty, if it can be possibly borne with. Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His Sacred Majesty looks kindly and he seeks their conversion, for, if he did not, repentance would come upon His Sacred Majesty. They are bidden to turn from evil ways that they be not chastised. For His Sacred Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind, and joyousness.'

**True conquest.** Asoka goes on to explain that true conquest consists in the conquest of men's hearts by the Law of Duty or Piety,<sup>1</sup> and to relate that he had already won such real victories, not only in his own dominions, but in kingdoms six hundred leagues away, including the realm of the Greek king Antiochos, and the dominions of the four kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander, who dwell beyond (or 'to the north of') 'that Antiochos'; and likewise to the south, in the kingdoms of the Cholas and the Pāndyas, as far as the Tāmraparni river; and also in the king's dominions among the various tribes or nations called Yonas, Kāmbojas, Nabhapantis of Nābhaka, Bhojas, and Pitinikas, as well as among the Āndhras and Pulindas<sup>2</sup>—in fact, 'everywhere', he says, 'men hearing His Sacred Majesty's ordinance based on the Law of Duty and his instruction in that Law, practise and will practise that Law'.

The royal preacher then extols the true conquest wrought by the Law as being full, not only of transitory delight, but of precious fruit which remains sound in the next world. He concludes by exhorting his sons and grandsons to pursue the path of true conquest; and, if perchance they should become involved in a conquest by force of arms (or 'from self-will', as Hultzsch), to take their pleasure in patience and gentleness, so that they may by effort attain that joy of spirit which avails for both this world and the next.

**Special Kalinga edicts.** The subject is continued in the two special edicts which the victor composed a little later for the benefit of the conquered provinces, one being addressed to the high officers of a town named Samāpā, and the other to those of a second town called Tosali. A postscript enjoins the viceroys of Taxila and Ujjain, the governments which Asoka himself had held as Prince, to apply the principles enunciated, and to take effectual steps by means of periodical tours and public proclamations on certain holidays to see that the imperial commands were translated into practice.

The emperor starts by affirming that 'all men are my children', echoing a saying attributed to Buddha. He then seeks to win the confidence of the unsubdued border tribes, and announces that specially trained officers will be sent to look after their interests. He laments that some servants of the state, failing to realize his

<sup>1</sup> Milton offers a surprisingly exact parallel passage:

They err, who count it glorious to subdue  
By conquest far and wide, to overrun  
Large countries, and in fields great battles win,  
Great cities by assault . . .

But if there be in glory aught of good,  
It may by means far different be attained  
Without ambition, war, or violence;  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance (*Paradise Regained*, iii. 71-92).

<sup>2</sup> Rock Edict V adds the Rāshtrikas of the Marāthā country, and the Gāndhāras of the north-western frontier.



paternal sentiments, had at times gone so far as to inflict unjust imprisonment or torture. He warns his officers that they must beware of yielding to the vices of 'envy, lack of perseverance, harshness, impatience, want of application, laziness, and indolence', threatening them with his displeasure if they should fail in their duty.

Those admirable instructions, which could not be bettered to-day, show how Asoka's remorse for the horrors of his one aggressive war bore fruit in the practical administration of his frontier provinces.

**Contemporary powers.** The references in the edict first quoted to other potentates, nations, and tribes obviously have much historical importance. When duly interpreted they prove that Asoka was contemporary with Antiochos Theos, grandson of Seleukos Nikator, the foe and afterwards the ally of Asoka's grandfather; with Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt;<sup>1</sup> with Magas, the ruler of Cyrene to the west of Egypt; and with an Alexander, probably King of Epirus. Chronologists show that the last year in which those four princes were alive together appears to have been 258 B.C., and that the edict consequently cannot be much later in date. It is actually dated in either the thirteenth or fourteenth regnal year, equivalent to 257 or 256 B.C. The document further proves that the emperor of India enjoyed the privilege of friendly intercourse with the Hellenistic kings named, that he was at liberty to conduct Buddhist propaganda in their dominions, and that he succeeded in gaining attention to his teaching. We also learn that the Tamil kingdoms of the Cholas and Pāndyas were then in existence, the Maurya emissaries penetrating as far as the Tāmraparni river in Tinnevely, the seat of the pearl and the conch-shell trade, chiefly conducted at the now vanished port of Korkai. Another edict mentions two more Tamil kingdoms, namely that of Keralaputra, or the Malabar coast, and that of Satiyaputra, probably equivalent to the Satyamangalam province of the later kingdom of Madura. That province skirted the borders of Mysore, Malabar, Coimbatore, and Madura, along the line of the western Ghāts. We thus obtain a welcome glimpse of the history of the Far South at a definite date; the first, and for a long time the only chronological foothold in the story of the Tamil kingdoms.

We are further informed concerning the names of sundry



Coin of Ptolemy Philadelphos.

<sup>1</sup> Ptolemy was a king with great power and wealth, and a liberal patron of literature and science. Euclid lived at Alexandria in his time. Ptolemy founded colonies on the Red Sea coast.



considerable tribes or nations who were included more or less completely in Asoka's dominions or had been brought under his influence.

The accuracy of the Greek accounts concerning the relations between Seleukos Nikator and Chandragupta is confirmed by the edicts, which disclose the friendship of the grandson of Seleukos with the grandson of Chandragupta.<sup>1</sup>

**Foreign Buddhist missions.** The surprising intimation that Buddhist missions were dispatched in the middle of the third century B.C. to distant Hellenistic kingdoms in Asia and Africa, and perhaps in Europe, opens up a wide field for reflection and speculation.

While the primary authority for the history of Asoka must always be his inscriptions, much valuable supplementary information is obtained from other sources. One of those sources is to be found in the chronicles of Ceylon called the *Mahāvamsa* and *Dīpavamsa*. The latter, the older of the two, seems to have been composed in the fourth or fifth century A.C. The statements of the edicts concerning the imperial Buddhist propaganda are amplified by the Ceylonese chroniclers, who describe nine distinct missions, which embraced seven Indian countries lying between the Himalayas and Peshāwar in the north and a region called Mahishamandala in the south, usually identified with the southern portion of the Mysore state. Two other missions are said to have been dispatched to countries outside India proper, namely, Suvarnabhūmi, or Lower Burma, and Lankā, or Ceylon. The chronicler gives the names of the missionaries employed in each case, and some of those names are also recorded in inscriptions from the Bhilsā topes. The list may be accepted as correct, subject to the remark that the propaganda in Lower Burma seems to have had little effect. The earliest form of Buddhism in that country, so far as definite evidence goes, was of the Mahāyāna kind,

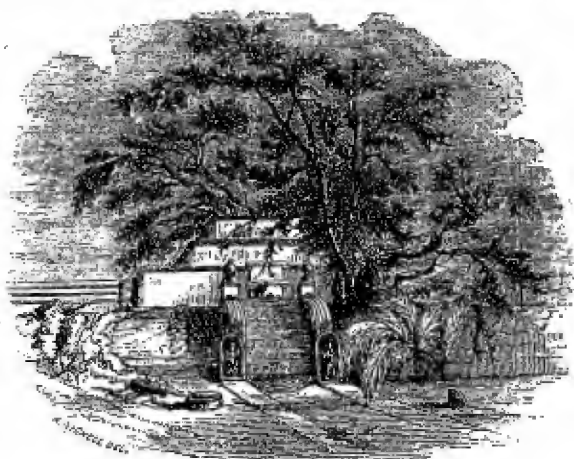
<sup>1</sup> The versions of the edicts are extracted from those in *Asoka*<sup>2</sup>, Oxford, 1909, with corrections. The name of the conquered province is written in the edict both in the singular and the plural. It was sometimes known as the 'Three Kalingas'.

The name Tāmraparnī refers to the river in the Tinnevely District, and not to Ceylon, as wrongly stated in *Asoka*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 156, 174. The intercourse of Asoka with the island did not begin until after the accession of Devānampiya Tissa, several years subsequent to the date in the thirteenth and partly in the fourteenth regnal year, equivalent to about 257 and 256 B.C. Tissa's accession may be dated about 251 B.C. Exact dates in the early history of Ceylon cannot be determined with complete certainty. The Satiyaputra kingdom should be identified as in the text, and not with the Tulu country, as in *E.H.I.*<sup>3</sup>, Oxford, 1914, pp. 163, 185, 446, 459. See *Ind. Ant.*, vol. xli (1912), p. 231; vol. xlv (1916), p. 200.

For the meaning of *Devānampiya* and *Piyadasi* used as royal titles see *Asoka*<sup>2</sup>, p. 22. Mr. Yazdani interprets *Piyadasi* as meaning 'the well-wisher (of all)'. However the titles may be analysed etymologically they were used merely as formal royal style or *protocole*, and are best translated by approximate equivalents.

different from the Buddhism of Asoka, and apparently imported from northern India.

**Mission to Ceylon.** The mission to Ceylon was a complete success, although the conversion of the island was not suddenly effected by a series of astounding miracles as related in the monkish stories. It was, no doubt, a gradual, although tolerably rapid process, aided materially by powerful royal encouragement.<sup>1</sup> The mission came in 251 or 250 B.C. on the initiative of King Tissa, who ascended the throne about that time, and reigned, like his



THE BO-TREE AT ANARAJAPORA.

friend Asoka, for forty years. During his rule he expended most of his energy in measures for the propagation of the Buddhist religion, and in erecting splendid buildings for its service. The leading missionary was Mahendra or Mahinda, Asoka's younger brother, who settled down in the island and died there about 204 B.C. His memory is perpetuated by monuments which bear his name. He was aided by his sister, who is remembered by her title Sanghamitrā, 'Friend of the Church', or 'Order', and was as successful among the women as Mahendra was among the men. The Indian tradition which represents Mahendra as the younger brother of Asoka is of greater authority than the island legends which describe him as a son of the emperor.

Buddhism won a decisive victory in Ceylon during the long reign of Tissa, and has never lost its hold on the island, where its influence,

<sup>1</sup> I believe that the missionaries came from Mahendra's monastery at Madura in Pāndya territory.

on the whole, has been for good. A well-informed and sympathetic writer observes that :

'The missions of King Asoka are amongst the greatest civilizing influences in the world's history; for they entered countries for the most part barbarous and full of superstition, and amongst these animistic peoples Buddhism spread as a wholesome leaven.

The history of Ceylon and Burma, as of Siam, Japan, and Tibet, may be said to begin with the entrance into them of Buddhism; and in these lands it spread far more rapidly and made a far deeper impression than in China with its already ancient civilization.

As to-day Christianity spreads very rapidly amongst the animistic peoples of Africa, India, and the South Sea islands, exerting a strong influence and replacing superstition and chaos by a reasonable belief in One God and an orderly universe, so Buddhism in these eastern lands has exerted a beneficent influence by putting Karma, the law of cause and effect, in the place of the caprice of demons and tribal gods, and a lofty system of morals in the place of tribal custom and *taboo*.

The Buddhist missionaries, moreover, brought with them much of the culture of their own land. It seems clear, for instance, that it was Mahinda who brought into Ceylon the arts of stone carving and of irrigation which his father had so successfully practised in India; and the Ceylon Buddhist of to-day thinks of his religion as the force to which his country owes the greatness of her past history. . . . Not far from the ruined city of Anurādhapura a lovely rocky hill rises out of a dense sea of jungle, and here is the rock-hewn 'study' and the tomb of the great and gentle prince Mahinda, who about 250 B.C. brought Buddhism to Ceylon.

From that day to this Buddhism has been the dominant religion of the island. Its king, Tissa, entered into alliance with Asoka, and did all he could to foster the religion of Gautama; and he and all his successors built the great Sacred City of Anurādhapura, in which vast hill-like *dāgobas*, higher than St. Paul's Cathedral and covering many acres of ground; rear their mighty domes above the trees of a royal park and royal baths and palaces given to the Sangha. . . . The 7,774 Bhikkhus [monks or friars] who to-day keep alive the religion are thus descendants in an unbroken succession of the great Mahinda himself, and in Ceylon monasticism has had a unique chance of proving its worth.<sup>1</sup>

Anurādhapura or Anurājapura, the Buddhist Rome, may serve as the measure and symbol of Asoka's influence on the world.

**Council of Pātaliputra.** But the monkish authors of Ceylon, whom many European writers on Buddhism have been too ready to accept as primary authorities, give none of the credit to the emperor. According to them, the conversion of the island and other lands was the work of the saint or *thera* named Tissa, who convoked a church council at Pātaliputra and then sent out his emissaries. The Ceylonese stories, written many centuries after the events described, have no just claim to be regarded as authorities superior to the words of Asoka, who never mentions either the saint or the

<sup>1</sup> K. J. Saunders, *The Story of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, 1916, pp. 76-9. 'Rome of to-day is a mean thing, the Forum a mean jostle of littleness; compared with the extended enormous ruin of the Sacred City—vast, resigned, silent, leisurely, with full consciousness of an eternity of desolation to face' (Farrer, *In Old Ceylon*, 1908, p. 346).

Council, while emphatically presenting all the measures taken for the furtherance of religion as having been initiated by himself. I believe Asoka's word. The Council of Pātaliputra may be accepted as a fact, because it is vouched for by Indian as well as Ceylonese tradition. But, in my opinion, the monks have dated it wrongly. The probability is that it was convoked towards the close of the reign of Asoka, after the publication of his principal sets of inscriptions, the Fourteen Rock Edicts, and the Seven Pillar Edicts. It may have been the occasion for the promulgation of his latest known records, the Minor Pillar Edicts, which deal specially with the deadly sin of schism, although those documents do not refer expressly to the Council.

**Upagupta and Thera Tissa.** Northern tradition, which was much more likely to be well founded than the tales composed by the Ceylon monks and distorted by theological bias, testifies that the instructor of Asoka in Buddhism was Upagupta of Mathurā, son of Gupta the perfumer of Benares. A monastery bearing his name still existed in the seventh century A.C. at Mathurā. No doubt is possible that Upagupta was a real historical person, the fourth patriarch of the Buddhist church. The incidents of his story have been transferred by the Ceylon chroniclers to the Thera Tissa, the son of Moggali. The proof that the two names refer to the same person is absolutely conclusive.

**Asoka a monk.** The admonitions of Upagupta produced many effects besides the dispatch of missionaries. He took his imperial pupil in 249 B.C. on a tour round the principal holy places of the faith,<sup>1</sup> beginning with the Lumbini Garden, the modern Rummindāi in the Nepalese Tarai, where the perfect inscription on a pillar still standing commemorates the emperor's visit. Asoka also gave up hunting and the practice of eating meat, in which he had previously indulged. All slaughter of animals for the royal kitchen was prohibited. Asoka at least once temporarily assumed the garb of a monk. Long afterwards the Chinese pilgrim I-tsing saw a statue representing him as so robed. Buddhist 'orders' not being irrevocable, it is open to any layman to become a monk for a short time and then to return to the world. In fact, every male Burmese at the present day is expected to make a stay, long or short, in a monastery.

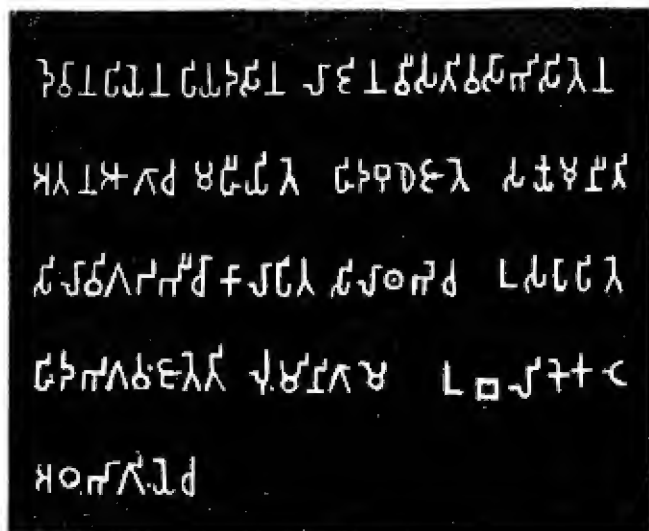
**Imperial review of policy.** In 242 B.C., Asoka, who was then growing old, and had been on the throne for over thirty years, undertook to review the measures taken during his reign for the promotion of religion, the teaching of moral duty, and the welfare of his subjects. That review was embodied in a series of edicts inscribed on pillars, and hence called the Seven Pillar Edicts, which must be read as an appendix or supplement to the earlier

<sup>1</sup> M. Foucher has proved that a sculpture on the eastern gate at Sānchi must represent the solemn visit of Asoka to the sacred tree at Bodh Gayā (*La Porte orientale du Stūpa de Sānchi*, Paris, 1910, pp. 80, 75).

proclamations engraved on rocks. The foreign missions are not mentioned; I do not know why.

**Ahimsā.** The fifth Pillar Edict expresses the emperor's matured views on the subject of *ahimsā*, or abstention from injury to or slaughter of animals. He indicates his disapproval of the practice

## FACSIMILE



## TRANSLITERATION

1. Devānāpiyena piyadasina      lājina viśativasābhāsitenā
2. atana āgācha mahiyite      hida budhe jāte sakyamunīti
3. silā vigadabbhichā kulāpita      silāthabhecha usapāpīte
4. hida bhagavam jāteti      lunminigāme ubalikekate
5. athabhāgiyecha

## ASOKA'S INSCRIPTION ON THE RUMMINDEI PILLAR.

of castration or caponing, and publishes many rules for the protection of living creatures. It is a surprising fact that horned cattle are not included in the list of animals the slaughter of which was forbidden; whereas the *Arthasāstra* (Book II, chap. 26) contains the clause:

'Cattle such as a calf, a bull, or a milch cow shall not be slaughtered.'

We have seen that the government of Taxila had felt no scruple in presenting Alexander with thousands of cattle fatted for slaughter. That Taxilan sentiment probably explains Asoka's

abstention from forbidding a practice which his old subjects in the north-west would not readily abandon. It is unlikely that the feelings of the public of Taxila had changed materially during the seventy-four years which had elapsed since the Macedonian visit to their city. The facts thus noted throw light on the obscure problem of the development of the passionate feeling in favour of the sanctity of the cow, which is now the most conspicuous and universal outward mark of Hinduism. It is clear that the feeling in anything like its present vehemence was not fully developed in the days of either Alexander or Asoka.

The prohibitions against animal slaughter in Pillar Edict V coincide to a considerable extent with those recorded in the *Arthasāstra*. Both documents, for instance, forbid the killing of parrots, starlings, and 'Brahminy' ducks.

**Asoka's last years.** The publication of the Seven Pillar Edicts in 242 B.C. is the last event in Asoka's reign which can be precisely dated. The Council of Pataliputra may be placed, as already observed, a little later, somewhere about 240 B.C., and I would assign the same date approximately to the Minor Pillar Edicts which denounce the sin of schism. The Council is said to have been convoked in order to repress heresy, and the publication of the special edicts directed against divisions in the church may be reasonably regarded as a result of the deliberations of the Council. Some traditions represent Asoka as having become in his old age a doting devotee, who wasted the resources of the empire in indiscriminate charity to monks and monasteries. It has also been asserted that he abdicated. His authentic records give no support to such legends or notions. They exhibit him to the last as a masterful autocrat ruling Church and State alike with a strong hand, as Charlemagne did in Europe more than a thousand years later. It is possible, of course, that Asoka may have descended from the throne towards the close of his life and devoted the short remainder of his days to religious exercises, but there is no good evidence that he actually did so.

**Classes of inscriptions.** It will be convenient at this point to explain briefly the nature and distribution of the remarkable inscriptions so often cited. They fall naturally into two main classes, those inscribed on rocks *in situ* or on detached boulders, and those inscribed on highly finished monolithic columns or pillars. The rock edicts, which are the earlier in date, occur mostly in the more distant and out-of-the-way localities. The columns or pillars are found in the home provinces, where the fine sandstone needed for their construction was procurable.

The records, of which many are substantially and some absolutely perfect, may be arranged in eight groups in chronological order as follows :

(i) The Minor Rock Edicts ; two documents dating from about 258 or 257 B.C. No. 1 is found in variant recensions at seven localities ; but No. 2 is known at one only.

(ii) The Bhābrū Edict, on a detached boulder, now in Calcutta.

The purport of the record is unique. The date probably is the same as that of the Minor Rock Edicts.

(iii) The Fourteen Rock Edicts, in seven more or less complete recensions, varying considerably, and dating after 257 and 256 B. C.

(iv) The Kalinga Edicts, in two recensions, referring only to the conquered province, and substituted for certain of the Fourteen Rock Edicts; they may be dated in 256 B. C.

(v) The Cave Inscriptions, being records of dedications inscribed on the walls of three caves hewn in the rock of the Barābar hills near Gayā, in 257 and 250 B. C.

(vi) The Tarāi Pillar Inscriptions, being two commemorative records on columns in the Nepalese Tarāi, erected in 249 B. C.

(vii) The Seven Pillar Edicts in six recensions (excepting Edict 7, which is found at one place only), dating from 243 and 242 B. C.

(viii) The Minor Pillar Edicts, four in number, dating between 242 and 232 B. C. Two documents, one at Sārnāth, and the other at Sānchī, are inscribed on separate columns; the others are postscripts to the Pillar Edicts at Allahabad.

**Distribution of inscriptions.** The distribution of the inscriptions is indicated on the map of Asoka's empire. The Rock Edicts, including the Minor Rock Edicts, the Bhābrū Edict, and the Cave Inscriptions, are widely distributed from the extreme north-western corner of the Panjāb to the northern districts of Mysore. They are found on the coasts of both the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, so that they may be said to cover an area extending from  $34^{\circ} 20'$  to  $14^{\circ} 49'$  N. lat., and from about  $72^{\circ} 15'$  to  $85^{\circ} 50'$  E. long., that is to say, twenty degrees of latitude and thirteen of longitude. Additions to the list probably will be discovered when Afghanistan and certain other frontier regions shall be open to research. The Maski inscription in the Nizam's Dominions was not noticed until 1915. It is particularly precious because it is the only record which specifies the emperor's personal name Asoka.<sup>1</sup> All the other documents describe him by his titles only. It is not unlikely that more records may be found within the limits of India. Although some of the sites of the Rock Edicts are now in the wilderness, every one of the localities in Asoka's time was frequented either as a place of pilgrimage or for other good reason.

The positions of more than thirty monolithic columns or pillars of Asoka are recorded. Ten of those now visible are inscribed. The area of their distribution is not so large as that of the rock inscriptions, probably owing to the difficulty of obtaining suitable blocks of stone. One, which formerly stood at a village in the Ambāla (Umballa) District, Panjāb, is now at Delhi. Others still exist at Sānchī in the Bhopāl State, Central India. Those two localities are the most remote from Pātaliputra the capital.

**Extent of the empire.** The extent of Asoka's empire is known with sufficient precision from the details of the distribution of

<sup>1</sup> It begins with the words *Devānampiyasa Asokasa*.





'Everywhere in my dominions the subordinate officials, and the Commissioner and the District Officers every five years must proceed on circuit, as well for their other business as for this special purpose, namely, to give instruction in the Law of Duty (or "Piety") to wit—"A meritorious ('excellent') thing is the hearkening to father and mother; a meritorious thing is liberality to friends, acquaintances, relations, Brahmans, and ascetics; a meritorious thing is abstention from the slaughter of living creatures; a meritorious thing is small expense and small accumulation"' (*Rock Edict III*).

'There is no such almsgiving as the almsgiving of the Law of Duty (or "Piety")—friendship in duty, liberality in duty, association in duty.

Herein does it consist—in proper treatment of slaves and servants, hearkening to father and mother, &c.' (*Rock Edict XI*).

'A man must not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another man without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reasons only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another.

By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people' (*Rock Edict XII*).<sup>1</sup>

'Both this world and the next are difficult to secure save by intense love of the Law of Duty (or "Piety"), intense self-examination, intense obedience, intense dread, intense effort' (*Pillar Edict I*).

'The Law of Duty is excellent.'

But wherein consists the Law of Duty? In these things, to wit—little impiety, many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness, and purity' (*Pillar Edict II*).

'With various blessings has mankind been blessed by former kings, as by me also; by me, however, with the intent that men may conform to the Law of Duty (or "Piety"), has it been done even as I thought' (*Pillar Edict VII*).

It would be easy to illustrate in detail every one of Asoka's precepts from Buddhist books, as well as from the existing practice in countries where Buddhism now prevails. Jain and Brahmanical writings also might be quoted to show that the morality inculcated was, on the whole, common to all the Indian religions. The Jains, however, go even farther than the Buddhists in applying the principle of *ahimsa*, or non-injury to living creatures, while those Brahmanical Hindus who considered bloody sacrifices indispensable necessarily were unable to give complete assent to the imperial doctrine. The gradual growth of a feeling of distaste for animal sacrifices discussed in an earlier chapter of this work undoubtedly was stimulated by the action of Asoka continued for many years and supported by all the power of an efficient imperial organization. The Buddhist teaching was superior to that of the rival religions in the prominence it gave to the 'happiness of all creatures' as the main object of morality. Buddhism, in spite of its agnostic,

<sup>1</sup> 'Every sect favourably regards him who is faithful to its precepts, and in truth he is to be commended' (Akbar's 'Happy Sayings', *Amn*, vol. iii, tr. Jarrett, p. 391).

pessimistic philosophy, is in practice a creed which tends to cheerfulness ; a fact apparent to all observers in Burma.

**Asoka an ardent Buddhist.** Asoka, although tolerant of competing creeds, and even willing to pursue the policy of concurrent endowment, as proved by his costly gifts to the Ājīvika ascetics, an order closely akin to the Digambara or nude Jains, was personally an ardent Buddhist. His zeal for the teaching of Gautama Buddha is expressed emphatically in the unique Bhābrū Edict of early date, inscribed on a boulder in Eastern Rājputāna and addressed to the Church.

'You know, Reverend Sirs, how far extend my respect for and faith in the Buddha, the Sacred Law, and the Church.

Whatsoever, Reverend Sirs, has been said by the Venerable Buddha, all that has been well said.'

He then proceeds to enumerate seven passages or texts from the Sacred Law, which he commends to the study of monks and nuns, as well as of the laity, male and female. All of those passages have been identified in the Canon. They begin with the well-known First Sermon, and end with the remarkable admonition by Buddha to his son Rahula on the necessity of speaking the exact truth.<sup>1</sup>

Three of the Minor Pillar Edicts (Sārnāth, Sānehī, and Kausāmbī), which prescribe the penalty of excommunication for schism, and the two Tarāi Pillar Edicts are equally Buddhist.

**Asoka's hard work.** Asoka worked hard, very hard ; carrying out conscientiously the instructions of his grandfather's preceptor.

'If a king is energetic', says the author of the *Arthasāstra*, 'his subjects will be equally energetic . . . when in court, he shall never cause his petitioners to wait at the door. . . . He shall, therefore, personally attend to the business of gods, of heretics, of Brahmans learned in the Vedas, of earth, of sacred places, of minors, the aged, the afflicted, and the helpless, and of women ; all this in order, or according to the urgency or pressure of such kinds of business.

All urgent calls he shall hear at once, and never put off ; for when postponed they will prove too hard or even impossible to accomplish. . . . Of a king the religious vow is his readiness for action ; satisfactory discharge of duties in his performance of sacrifice ; equal attention to all is as the offer of fees and ablution towards consecration.

In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness ; in their welfare his welfare ; whatever pleases himself he shall consider as not good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.

Hence the king shall ever be active and discharge his duties ; the root of wealth is activity, and of evil its reverse.'

**Asiatic idea of kingship.** The Asiatic idea of kingship has ordinarily required that the monarch should hear personally as many causes and complaints as possible, should dispose of them on

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese version of the admonition to Rahula has been translated into French by M. Sylvain Lévi (*J. As.*, 1896, Mai-Juin), and into English by Beal (*Texts from the Buddhist Canon commonly known as Dhammapada*; Kegan Paul, 1902). Rockhill gives a summary abstract of the Tibetan version in *Udānavarga* (Kegan Paul, 1892).

the spot by final orders untrammelled by legal formalities, and that he should be easily accessible to the meanest of his subjects, even at the cost of much personal inconvenience. Long after Asoka's time the Timūrid emperors of India acted on those principles, and made the daily public audiences an essential feature of their policy. Even Jahāngīr, who sometimes failed in the higher duties of his station, was extremely particular to do justice as he conceived it in person, and to appear in public three times a day.

A saying of Akbar that 'divine worship in monarchs consists in their justice and good administration' reproduces one of the sentiments quoted above from Kautilya.

**Asoka on himself.** Asoka expressed similar ideas with all possible emphasis :

'For a long time past it has not happened that business has been dispatched and that reports have been received at all hours.

Now by me this arrangement has been made that at all hours and in all places—whether I am dining, or in the ladies' apartments, or in my private room, or in the mews, or in my (?) conveyance, or in the palace gardens—the official Reporters should report to me on the people's business; and I am ready to do the people's business in all places. . . . I have commanded that immediate report must be made to me at any hour and in any place, because I never feel full satisfaction in my efforts and dispatch of business. For the welfare of all folk is what I must work for—and the root of that, again, is in effort and the dispatch of business. And whatsoever exertions I make are for the end that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy here, they may in the next world gain heaven' (*Rock Edict VI*, amended version).

It is easy to criticize such regulations from the point of view of an official in Europe and to prove that the orderly dispatch of business would be hindered and obstructed by constant interruptions. The criticism would be sound whether in Europe or Asia, but the extreme importance attached by the eastern nations to the personal intervention and the accessibility of their rulers wins so much popularity for a sovereign who satisfies the sentiment of his people that a king may find it worth his while to submit to the inconveniences which necessarily result from regulations such as those laid down by Asoka.

**Maurya art.** When writing on another occasion about the art of the Gupta period, I recorded an observation which is equally applicable to the Maurya age, especially to the reign of Asoka, and may be repeated here, as I cannot express my meaning better.

'In India the establishment of a vigorous dynasty ruling over wide dominions has invariably resulted in the application of a strong stimulus to the development of man's intellectual and artistic powers. Such a dynasty, exercising its administrative duties effectively, fostering commerce, maintaining active intercourse, commercial and diplomatic, with foreign states, and displaying the pomp of a magnificent court, both encourages the desire to do great things, and provides the material patronage without which authors and artists cannot live.'

<sup>1</sup> *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, April-Juni, 1914, p. 1.

The reign of Asoka presents in perfection all the conditions enumerated in that extract as being favourable to the development of notable schools of art and literature. It may be that art had flourished almost in equal measure under the rule of his father Bindusāra and his grandfather Chandragupta. In fact, there are substantial grounds for believing that buildings of exceptional magnificence were erected in the time of the first Maurya emperor. Splendid architecture necessarily involves the successful cultivation of sculpture, painting, and all the decorative arts. Greek testimony, as already mentioned, declares that the palace of Chandragupta surpassed the royal abodes of Persia, and records some details of the rich ornament of the building. But the whole has vanished, and there is little reason to expect or hope that the excavations at Taxila and Pātaliputra begun in 1913 will reveal much art work of the time of the early Maurya kings preserved well enough to furnish material for satisfactory aesthetic criticism. The principal reason is that, so far as our present knowledge extends, the great edifices built by Asoka's predecessors were constructed mainly of perishable wood, just as the magnificent structures at Mandalay were constructed by the latest Burmese sovereigns. In the time of Chandragupta Maurya and his son brick and stone seem to have been used chiefly for the foundations and plinths of timber superstructures. Wooden architecture implies the execution of most of the decorative features in material equally perishable. Unless the progress of exploration should disclose an unexpected treasure of early Maurya sculpture in stone or terra-cotta, materials for the history of art during the reigns of Chandragupta and Bindusāra must continue to be scanty. The general use of stone in northern India for building, sculpture, and decoration certainly dates from the reign of Asoka, who was influenced by Persian and Greek example. I do not either assert or believe that prior to the days of Asoka the art of building in stone was absolutely unknown in India, or that all artistic work was executed in perishable material; but the ascertained facts indicate that previous to his reign permanent materials were used rarely and sparingly either for architecture or for ornament. When Megasthenes was at Pātaliputra the city was defended by a wooden palisade. The walls, the stone palace within the city, and many sacred edifices are ascribed to Asoka.<sup>1</sup>

The definite history of Indian art, therefore, still begins with Asoka. At present it is impossible to write any earlier chapter.

**Asokan sculpture.** No building of Asoka's age is standing, unless some of the *stūpas* near Bhilsā may have been built by him. An early *stūpa*, being merely a domical mound of masonry, does

<sup>1</sup> The text refers only to Asoka's empire, and more especially to northern India. In the Tamil countries, during the early centuries of the Christian era, Hindu temples were built of wood or brick. Stone structures did not come into fashion until late in the sixth century, in the Pallava kingdom (Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Pallava Antiquities*, Probsthain, London, 1916, p. 74).

not offer much scope for architectural design. We can judge of Asokan art better from sculpture than from architecture. The noble sculpture of Asoka's age exhibits a mature form of art, the evolution of which through earlier attempts is hidden from our eyes for the reasons explained above. Many details indicate that the artist in stone closely followed the example set by his fellow



Capital, Sarnath.

craftsmen in wood and ivory. Indeed, ordinary Indian usage seems to have favoured the exercise of his skill by a carver in any material that came to his hand. If Asoka insisted, as he did, on his statuary and reliefs being executed in enduring stone, he was able to utilize the services of skilled Indian workmen accustomed to work in more perishable materials, who were clever enough to adapt their technique to the permanent medium. The art of his time, although obviously affected by Persian and Hellenistic influences, is mainly Indian in both spirit and execution. Take, for instance, the celebrated Sarnath capital. Much of the design was suggested by Persia. But even the lions in the round are wholly different from and far superior to their Persian prototypes

in pose and style, while the bas-reliefs of the guardian animals of the four quarters on the sides of the abacus are purely Indian. It is improbable that they could have been executed by any sculptor who had not been soaked in ancient Indian tradition, although his previous practical experience might have been gained by working in wood or ivory.

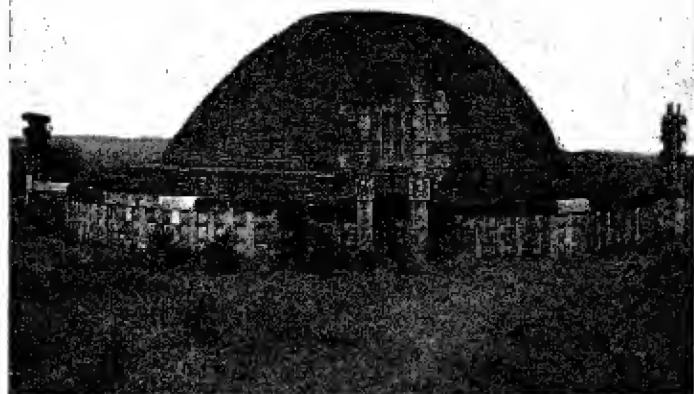
**Perfect execution.** The perfection of the execution of the best examples of Asokan sculpture is astonishing. Sir John Marshall, who has had wide experience of Greek art, praises the Sarnath capital in the following terms :

‘Lying near the column were the broken portions of the upper part of the shaft and a magnificent capital of the well-known Persepolitan bell-

shaped type with four lions above, supporting in their midst a stone wheel or *dharmachakra*, the symbol of the law first promulgated at Sarnāth. Both bell and lions are in an excellent state of preservation and masterpieces in point of both style and technique—the finest carvings, indeed, that India has yet produced, and unsurpassed, I venture to think, by anything of their kind in the ancient world.

The same expert critic elsewhere comments on 'the extraordinary precision and accuracy which characterizes all Maurya work, and which has never, we venture to say, been surpassed even by the finest workmanship on Athenian buildings'.

The skill of the stone-cutters of the age could not be surpassed.



GREAT STŪPA, SANCHI (restored).

The monolithic columns of fine-grained sandstone, some of which exceed forty feet in height, exclusive of the separate capital, are marvels of technical execution.<sup>1</sup> The art of polishing hard stone was carried to such perfection that it is said to have become a lost art beyond modern powers. The sides of the Barabar caves excavated in most refractory gneiss rock are polished like glass mirrors. The burnishing of Firōz Shāh's *Lat*, the column from Topra, now at Delhi, is so exquisite that several observers have believed the column to be metallic. Quaint Tom Coryate in the seventeenth century described the monument as 'a brazen pillar'; and even Bishop Heber, early in the nineteenth century, received the impression that it was 'a high black pillar of cast metal'. The stonework of Asoka's time is equally well finished in all other respects. Most of the inscriptions are incised with extreme

<sup>1</sup> See illustration of Lauriya-Nandangarh pillar on p. 157.

accuracy in beautifully cut letters. Dr. Spooner notes similar 'absolute perfection' in the carpentry of the mysterious wooden platforms at Kumrahār, probably dating from the reign of Chandragupta.

**Skill in all arts.** The engineering ability displayed in the handling and transport of huge monolithic columns conveyed over immense distances is remarkable. When the excavations in progress at Taxila and Pātaliputra shall be more advanced, additional evidence of the skill of the Maurya engineers may be expected. Some has been disclosed already. The combined testimony of books, material remains, and pictorial relief sculpture proves that in the fourth and third centuries B. C. the command of the Maurya monarchs over luxuries of all kinds and skilled craftsmanship in all the manual arts was not inferior to that enjoyed by the Mogul emperors eighteen centuries later. Some fine jewellery, dating from 250 B. C. and associated with a gold coin of Diodotos and debased silver punch-marked coins, has been found in the Bir mound, the oldest part of the Taxila site.<sup>1</sup> The relief sculptures at Bharhut (Barhut) and Sāncī, some of which are little if at all later than the time of Asoka, and may be regarded as pictures executed in stone, exhibit most vividly all the details of the life of the age. It was a bustling, cheerful life, full of wholesome activity and movement. The artists delighted in representing it with frank realism, and in decorating their panels with ornaments of charming design treated with good taste.

**Education.** Asoka's decision to publish his views on Buddhist doctrine and the moral code deemed suitable for 'all sorts and conditions of men' in documents composed in vernacular dialects and inscribed in two distinct scripts implies a comparatively wide diffusion of education in his empire. The sites of all the inscriptions were carefully chosen at places where crowds of people either passed or congregated for one reason or another. The heavy cost of publication in such an enduring form would have been wasted if people could not read the edicts. Probably the numerous Buddhist monasteries served the purpose of schools, as they do now in Burma, and so produced a higher general percentage of literacy among the population than that existing at present. Most of the records are incised in the Brāhmī script, the ancient form of the modern characters used in writing Sanskrit and the allied languages of northern and western India; but two sets of the Fourteen Rock Edicts placed near the north-western frontier were engraved in the Kharoshthī script, a form of Aramaic writing used in that region. The language of the records exhibits several dialectic varieties, suitable for the different provinces.

**Literature.** The style of the Asoka inscriptions is not wanting in force and dignity. It recalls in some cases that of certain Upanishads. The most interesting of the documents present unmistakable internal evidence of being essentially the composition of the emperor himself. The edicts undoubtedly are closely

<sup>1</sup> J. P. H. S., iii. 9; *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, 1912-13, p. 41, pl. xxxix.



related as literature to the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya or Chānakya, who devotes a chapter to the subject of the drafting of royal orders and correspondence. A famous collection of moral aphorisms (*Chānakya Śataka*) attributed to Chandragupta's minister has been printed and may have been arranged by him. The chronology of ancient Indian literature is so ill defined that it would be difficult to name any other literary works as dating from the Maurya age. Professor Rhys Davids's belief that the *Kathāvatthu*, an important Buddhist treatise in Pāli, was actually composed in the time of Asoka is not shared by all scholars. But it is certain that the reigns of three emperors covering ninety years, during which magnificent courts were maintained and every form of art and luxury was cultivated with success, cannot have been unadorned by the works of eminent authors. It is clear that in the fourth century B.C. Indian literature could look back on a long past extending over many generations. Its history cannot have been interrupted in the third century at a time when the Indian empire had attained its widest extent and was in close touch with the civilizations of western Asia and northern Africa.

**Asoka and Akbar.** Few if any students of Indian history will be disposed to dispute the proposition that the most conspicuous and interesting names in the long roll of Indian monarchs are those of Asoka and Akbar. It so happens, as already observed, that both are better known to us than any others. Although it is impossible to draw a portrait of Asoka, he has disclosed so much of his character in his edicts that he seems to me at all events, after many years of special study, a very real and familiar figure. His remorse for the sufferings caused by the Kalinga war would have amused Akbar, who was one of the most ambitious of men and eager for the fame of a successful warrior, *gloriae percupidus*, as the Jesuit says. Akbar never was disturbed because his numerous aggressive wars caused infinite suffering. In that respect he resembled most ambitious kings. The attitude of Asoka was peculiar and obviously sincere. He has his reward in the vast diffusion of Buddhism, which constitutes his special work in the world, and may be counted to his credit as that 'true conquest' which was his ideal.

Asoka, although devout and zealous in the cause of his religion, was equally energetic in performing his kingly duties. There is no occasion for doubting that he did his best to live up to the admirable principles which he took so much pains to inculcate. Nothing could be better than the instructions addressed to his officers in the newly conquered province of Kalinga, which have been quoted.

A proclamation issued by Mr. Robert Cust to the Sikhs in the year 1848, between the first and the second Sikh wars, under instructions from John Lawrence, is strangely similar in both sentiment and expression :

'If any of your relations have joined the rebels, write to them to come back before blood is shed ; if they do so, their fault will be forgiven . . . what



is your injury I consider mine: what is gain to you I consider my gain. . . . Consider what I have said and talk it over with your relations . . . and tell those who have joined in the rebellion to return to me, as children who have committed a fault return to their fathers, and their faults will be forgiven them. . . . In two days I shall be in the midst of you with a force which you will be unable to resist.'<sup>1</sup>

I think that Asoka, who was a capable man of affairs, as well as a pious devotee, always kept an iron hand within the velvet glove, like John Lawrence, who was equally pious and equally practical.

The excellence of the art of Asoka's reign indicates that the Maurya emperor resembled Akbar in being a man of good taste. He spared no cost or pains, and knew how to employ people who used sound materials and did honest work. The administration of the Mauryas strikes me as having been singularly efficient all round in peace and war. The 'extraordinary precision and accuracy' noted by Sir John Marshall as characteristic of Maurya work in stone are the outward expression of similar accuracy and precision in the working of the government machine. Living under the eyes of the innumerable spies employed by the Maurya kings must have been dangerous and unpleasant for individuals at times; but the espionage system, worked as Chānakya describes it, was an instrument of extraordinary power in the hands of a strong, capable sovereign. If Asoka had not been capable he could not have ruled his huge empire with success for forty years, and left behind a name which is still fresh in the memory of men after the lapse of more than two millenniums.

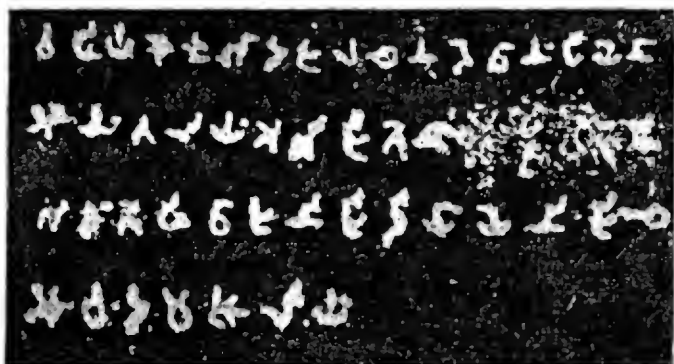
**Asoka's sons.** We do not know how or where Asoka passed away from the scene of his strenuous labours. A Tibetan tradition is said to affirm that he died at Taxila, and if that should be true it is possible that the researches in progress at that site so full of surprises may throw some light on the last days of the great Buddhist emperor. The names of several of his sons are on record. One, named Tivara, is mentioned in an inscription. Another, called Kunāla and by other names, is the centre of a cycle of wild legends of the folklore type. A third, named Jalauka, the subject of a long passage in the Kashmīr chronicle, clearly was a real personage, although certain fabulous stories are attached to his name. Several localities still identifiable are associated with his memory. He did not share his father's devotion to Buddhism, but on the contrary was an ardent worshipper of Siva, as was his consort Isānadēvi. He is also credited with the expulsion from the valley of certain unnamed non-Hindu foreigners (*mlechchhas*). He may have been the viceroy of his father and become independent after the death of Asoka. The chronicler includes both Asoka and Jalauka in the list of the kings of Kashmīr.

**Asoka's grandsons.** Asoka seems to have been succeeded

<sup>1</sup> Issued under direction of John Lawrence to the headmen of the Hoshiyarpur District (Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence (Rulers of India)*, 1905, p. 45 n.).

directly by two grandsons, Dasaratha in the eastern, and Samprati, son of Kunāla, in the western provinces. The real existence of the former is vouched for by brief dedicatory inscriptions in caves granted to the Ājīvika ascetics, and not far from the similar caves bestowed on the same order by Asoka. The inscriptions, which were recorded immediately after the accession of Dasaratha, are conclusive evidence of that prince's rule in Magadha.

The existence of the other grandson named Samprati has not yet been verified by any early inscription. But there is no reason to doubt that he actually ruled the western provinces after his grandfather's death. According to Jain authorities Ujjain was his capital. His name has been handed down by numerous local



INSCRIPTION OF DASARATHA.

traditions extending from Ajmēr in Rājputāṇa to Satrunjaya in Kāthiawār, where the most ancient of the crowd of Jain temples is said to have been founded by him. He is also credited with the erection of a temple at Nādlai in Jodhpur, now represented by a more modern building on the site; and with the foundation of the fortress of Jahāzpur, which guarded the pass leading from Mewār to Bundi. He is reputed to have been as zealous in promoting the cause of Jainism as Asoka had been in propagating the religion of Gautama.<sup>1</sup>

It seems reasonable to assume that Asoka's empire was divided in the first instance between his two grandsons; but no decisive proof of the supposed fact has been discovered, and nothing is known about the further history of either Dasaratha or Samprati.

**The last Maurya.** The Purāṇas record the names of several others successors of Asoka, with various readings, which need not

<sup>1</sup> Tod, *Annals of Mewār*, chap. iv (pop. ed., i, 201 n.); Forbes, *Rāsmālā* (1856), i, p. 7; *Rājputāṇa Gaz.* (Simla, 1880), iii, 52; *Bombay Gaz.* (1896), vol. i, part 1, p. 15.

be recited, as nothing material is known about the princes named. It is impossible to determine the extent of the dominions ruled by those later Mauryas. Brihadratha, the last prince of the dynasty, was slain about 185 B.C. by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra (or Pushpamitra) Sunga.

**The Sunga dynasty.** The usurper established a new dynasty known as that of the Sungas, which is said to have lasted for 112 years until 73 B.C. Their dominions apparently included Magadha and certain neighbouring provinces, extending southwards as far as the Narbadā. The names of the founder of the dynasty and some of his descendants ending in *mitra* have suggested the hypothesis that Pushyamitra may have been an Iranian, a worshipper of the sun (Mithra). He celebrated the *asvamedha* or horse sacrifice, a rite certainly associated with sun-worship. It marked the successful assertion by the prince performing it of a claim to have vanquished all his neighbours.

**Menander's invasion.** Pushyamitra was defeated by Khāravēla of Kalinga, but repelled the invasion of a Greek king, apparently Menander, the Milinda of Buddhist tradition, king of Kābul and the Panjāb. He advanced (about 175 B.C.) with a strong force into the interior of India; annexed the Indus delta, with the peninsula of Surāshtra (Kāthiāwār), and some other territories on the western coast; occupied Mathurā on the Jumna; besieged Madhyamikā, now Nagari near Chitōr in Rājputāna; invested Sākēta in southern Oudh; and threatened, or perhaps took Pātaliputra, the Sunga capital.

Madhyamikā, then the chief town of a branch of the Sibi people, who seems to have emigrated from the Panjāb, was in those days a place of much importance, which an invader could not safely pass by. Although the ruins have supplied much material for the building of Chitōr, traces of a Maurya edifice can still be discerned, and two inscriptions of the Sunga period have been found, which record the performance of *asvamedha* and *vājapeya* sacrifices.

**Brahmanical reaction.** Pushyamitra, whatever his origin may have been, was reckoned to be a Hindu. Sun-worship is consistent with Hinduism, and even at this day sects of Sauras or sun-worshippers exist. Good reasons warrant the belief that in ancient times the cult of the sun in north-western India, Surāshtra, and Rājputāna, was much more prominent than it is now. Tradition represents the first Sunga king as a fierce enemy of Buddhism and relates that he burnt a multitude of monasteries, carrying his ravages as far north as Jālandhar. The reign of Pushyamitra appears to mark a violent Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism, which had enjoyed so much favour in the time of Asoka. It is possible that the Hinduism of the Sungas may have been coloured by Magian practices. They were followers of the sacrificial Sāma-veda.<sup>1</sup>

The celebrated grammarian Patanjali was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, whose story is partly told in 'Mālavikā and Agni-

<sup>1</sup> M. M. Haraparsād Sāstri, in *J. & Proc. A. S. B.*, 1912, p. 287.

mitra' (*Mālavikāgnimitra*), a play by Kālidāsa, composed probably in the fifth century A. C.

**The Kāṇva dynasty.** Devabhūti, or Devabhūmi, the last of the Śūngas, a man of licentious habits, lost his life while engaged in a scandalous intrigue. His death was contrived by his Brahman minister, Vasudeva, who seated himself on the vacant throne, and so founded a short-lived dynasty of four kings, whose reigns collectively occupied only forty-five years. The brevity of the rule of each indicates a period of disturbance. Nothing is known about the doings of the Brahman kings, whose dynasty is called Kāṇva or Kāṇvāyana. The last of them was killed, about 28 B. C., by an Āndhra king whose identity is doubtful.

**The Āndhras.** It will be convenient to give in this place a brief notice of the Āndhra dynasty comprising thirty kings, whose rule endured for the exceptionally long period of four centuries and a half in round numbers. The details

of their history are too obscure and controverted for discussion in this work. The original kingdom of the Āndhras, the Telugu speaking people of the country afterwards called Telingāna, was situated in the deltas of the Godāvari and Krishna. It was reckoned powerful even in the time of Megasthenes, but



Āndhra coin.

nothing is known about its rulers at that date. The historical dynasty seems to have been established about the time of Asoka's death. His inscriptions mention the Āndhras in terms which apparently imply that their Rājā was in some measure subordinate to the emperor. It may be assumed that his decease enabled the Āndhras, like many other people, to assert their complete independence. After a short interval we find the kings exercising authority in the region of the western Ghāts, so that their dominion stretched right across the Deccan from sea to sea. They engaged in wars with both the dynasties of western Satraps, namely, the early Kshaharāta line which had its capital in the western Ghāts, and the somewhat later family which ruled at Ujjain. Both of the Satrap dynasties were of foreign origin, and associated with the Sakas. The Āndhra kings assumed the position of protectors of Hinduism and the caste institution. The most powerful of the later Āndhras was Gautamīputra Yaśna Śrī, who reigned for twenty-nine years, from about A. D. 173 to 202, or possibly a little earlier. The story of the decline and fall of the dynasty has not been fully recovered. The end of it may be placed somewhere about A. D. 225. Although the Āndhras may at some time or other have controlled Magadha and the ancient imperial capital, Pāṭaliputra, clear evidence that they did so has not yet come to light.

## CHRONOLOGY

(Dates nearly correct, but the Indian ones not guaranteed exact)

*Maurya Dynasty*

B. C.	Event.
326 or 325.	Chandragupta Maurya in his youth met Alexander.
323, June.	Death of Alexander at Babylon.
323-322.	Expulsion of Macedonian garrisons.
322.	Accession of <b>Chandragupta Maurya</b> . [Date possibly earlier.]
312.	Selenkos Nikator recovered Babylon and established Selenkidan era.
306.	Selenkos assumed title of king.
305.	Selenkos invaded India unsuccessfully.
302.	Megasthenes sent to Pataliputra as ambassador.
298.	Accession of <b>Bindusāra Amitraghāta</b> . Deimachos succeeded Megasthenes as ambassador.
285.	Ptolemy Philadelphos, king of Egypt, acc.
280.	Selenkos Nikator died; Antiochos Soter acc.
278 or 277.	Antigonos Gonatas, king of Macedonia, acc.
273.	<b>Asoka</b> [-vardhana] acc.
272.	Alexander, king of Epirus, acc.
269.	Consecration or coronation ( <i>abhisheka</i> ) of Asoka. [218 A. B. ( <i>anno Buddhe</i> ) in chronology of Ceylon].
261.	Antiochos Theos, king of Syria, acc.; the Kalinga war.
259.	Asoka abolished the imperial hunt, and dispatched missionaries.
258.	Magas, king of Cyrene died; ? Alexander, king of Epirus, died.
257, 256.	The Fourteen Rock Edicts, the Kalinga Edicts, and appointment of Censors.
254.	Asoka enlarged for the second time the <i>stūpa</i> of Konagamana.
251.	Tissa, king of Ceylon, acc.
251 or 250.	Mission of Mahendra (Mahinda) to Ceylon. [236 A. B.]
240.	Asoka's pilgrimage to the holy places.
? 248.	Independence of Bactria and Parthia.
247.	Ptolemy Philadelphos, king of Egypt, died.
247 or 246.	Antiochos Theos, king of Syria, died.
246.	She-hwang-ti became ruler of T'sin in China.
242.	Publication of the Seven Pillar Edicts.
242 or 239.	Antigonos Gonatas, king of Macedonia, died.
240-232.	Council of Pataliputra; Minor Pillar Edicts condemning schism.
232.	Asoka died; his grandson <b>Dasarratha</b> acc. in eastern provinces; and probably <b>Samprati</b> , another grandson, acc. in western provinces.
221.	She-hwang-ti became emperor of China.
211.	Tissa, king of Ceylon, died; Uttiya acc.
204.	Mahendra (Mahinda) died in Ceylon.
203.	Sanghamitrā, sister of Mahendra, died in Ceylon.
185.	<b>Brihadratha</b> , the last Maurya king, killed.

*Sunga Dynasty*

185. **Pushyamitra** (**Pushpamitra**) acc. Brahmanical reaction ; Patanjali.  
 175. Invasion of Menander.  
 73. **Devabhūti** (-bhūmi), the last Sunga king, killed.  
 73-28. *Kānva* or *Kānvaḍyana Dynasty*.

*Andhra Dynasty*

- about 230 Beginning of dynasty.  
 30 kings for about 4½ centuries.  
 A. D.  
 173-202. **Yajña Śrī**, king. [Possibly 7 or 8 years earlier.]  
 about 225. End of dynasty.

## AUTHORITIES

The following references are additional to those in the foot-notes and in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914) and *Asoka*<sup>1</sup> (1909).

Professor Hultzsch's edition of the Asoka inscriptions, of which a large part is in print, cannot be completed while the war lasts. The new Maski inscription has been well edited in *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, No. 1 (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1915 ; price one rupee).

For the Ajivikas see HOERNLE's exhaustive article in *ELSTING*, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics*, vol. i (1908). D. R. BRANDARKAR describes remains at Nagarī or Madhyamikā in *Progr. Rep. A. S., Western Circle*, 1915-16, p. 52.

*Ancient India*, by Prof. RAPSON (Cambridge University Press, 1914), is a good sketch.

Sundry papers in *J. R. A. S.* and other periodicals throw some fresh light on the period.

## CHAPTER 3

The Indo-Greek and other foreign dynasties of north-western India ; the Kushāns or Indo-Scythians ; Greek influence ; foreign commerce ; beginning of Chola history.

**Revolt of Bactria and Parthia.** About the middle of the third century, within a year or two of 250 B.C., while Asoka was at the height of his power, two important provinces, Bactria and Parthia, broke away from the Seleukidan empire, and set up almost simultaneously as independent kingdoms, with results which subsequently had considerable effect upon India.

**Parthia.** The movement in Parthia, the territory lying to the south-east of the Caspian Sea and inhabited by hardy horsemen with habits similar to those of the modern Turkomans, was of a national character, and seems to have lasted for several years. The independence of the kingdom may be dated approximately in 248 B.C. The chief named Arsakes, who had led his countrymen

in their fight for liberty, founded the Arsakidan dynasty of Persia which lasted for nearly five centuries until it was superseded by the Sassanians in A.D. 226. The Parthian power gradually extended eastwards until it comprised most of the dominions once ruled by the Achaemenian dynasty of Persia ; but its influence on India did not make itself felt until more than a century after the foundation of the kingdom.



MAP OF BACTRIA, ETC.

**Bactria.** The revolution in Bactria, the rich and civilized region between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus, which was reputed to contain a thousand towns and had been regarded as the premier province of the empire in Achaemenian times, was effected in the ordinary Asiatic manner by the rebellion of a governor named Diodotos.

Inasmuch as the newly formed kingdom adjoined Asoka's Kābul or Paropanisadai province, echoes of the revolution must have been heard at the court of Pātaliputra, although Indian documents are silent on the subject. While Asoka lived his strong arm and his friendly relations with the Hellenistic princes protected India against the ambition of Alexander's successors. When he had vanished from the scene and his empire had crumbled to pieces, many years did not elapse until the provinces beyond the Indus became the object of Greek aggression.

**Syrian raid on Kābul.** Euthydemus, the third king of Bactria, had become involved in a quarrel with Antiochos the Great of Syria, which was ended about 208 B.C. by the formal recognition of Bactrian independence. Shortly afterwards Antiochos crossed the Hindu Kush, and attacked an Indian prince named Subhāgasena (Sophagascenas), ruler of the Kābul valley. The invader, having extorted a large cash indemnity and many elephants, went home through Arachosia (Kandahār) and Drangiana. That raid had no permanent effect.

**Demetrios, King of the Indians.** But Demetrios, the fourth king of Bactria, and son of Euthydemus, became so powerful that he was able to subdue all Ariana or Afghanistan, and even to annex considerable territories in the Panjāb and western India. Hence he was known as 'King of the Indians'. The nearly contemporary square coins of Pantaleon and Agathokles present Indian features derived from the native coinage of Taxila and prove that Greek principalities, connected in some way with the conquests made by Demetrios, were established on the north-western frontier late in the second century B.C. A rival named Eukratides deprived Demetrios of Bactria about 175 B.C. and founded a new line of frontier princes. The names of about forty such rulers are known from coins. It is impossible to ascertain the exact relationship between the princes or to specify their respective territories with precision.

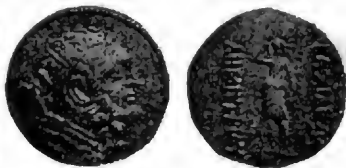
**Menander.** The most remarkable king was Menander, who reigned in Kābul from about 160 to 140 B.C. His invasion of India has been already described. He acquired a widespread reputation, and it is said that when he died various cities contended for the honour of giving sepulture to his ashes. His fine



Coin of Diodotos II.



Coin of Euthydemus.

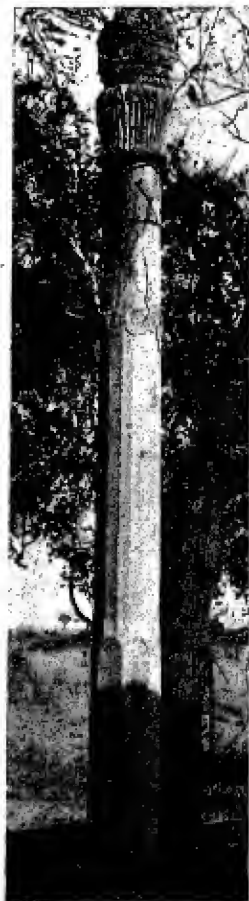


Coin of Demetrios.



coinage is abundant in many interesting types. Specimens have been found in India even to the south of the Jumna.

**Antialkidas.** We obtain an unexpected and startling glimpse of a slightly later king named Antialkidas, who ruled at Taxila, from an inscription at Besnagar near Bhilsā in Central India, which may be dated between 140 and 180 B.C. The record was incised by direction of Dion's son, Heliodoros of Taxila, who was sent as envoy to the ruler of Besnagar by King Antialkidas. Heliodoros dedicated a monolithic column to the honour of Vāsudeva, a form of Vishnu, whose worshipper he professed himself to be. The document is of value in the history of Indian religions as giving an early date for the *bhakti* cult of Vāsudeva, and as proving that people with Greek names and in the service of Greek kings had become the followers of Hindu gods.



Heliodoros Column.

**End of Bactrian monarchy.** In the interval between 140 and 120 B.C. a swarm of nomad tribes from the interior of Asia, consisting of Sakas and others, attacked both Parthia and Bactria.<sup>1</sup> Two Parthian kings were killed, and Greek rule in Bactria was extinguished. The last Graeco-Bactrian king was Heliokles, a member of the family of Eukratides. The end of the Bactrian monarchy, which had lasted little more than a century, may be placed somewhere between 140 and 180 B.C. Precise dates are not ascertainable.

**Parthia and India.** Mithridates I of Parthia (c. 171 to 136 B.C.) had annexed the country between the Indus and the Hydaspes, that is to say, the kingdom of Taxila, towards the close of his reign, about 138 B.C. The kings of Parthia were not able to retain effective control of the territory thus annexed, but the connexion established between the Parthian or Persian kingdom and India was sufficiently close to bring about the adoption of the Persian title of Satrap or Great Satrap by many Indian rulers of foreign origin. The use of that title continued for several hundred years. The last ruler to use it was the Saka Satrap of Surā-

<sup>1</sup> Indians used the term Saka (Śaka, Shaka) vaguely to denote foreigners from beyond the passes. In later times the name was often applied to Muhammadans, as in the *Eklinga Mahātmya*.

shtra who was conquered and dethroned by the Gupta emperor towards the close of the fourth century A.C.

**Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian princes.** Although Heliokles, the last Greek king of Bactria, probably had disappeared before



Coin of Eukratides.

130 B.C., numerous princes with Greek names continued to govern principalities in the Kābul country and along the north-western frontier of India much longer. The last of them was named



Coin of Menander.



Coin of Antialkidas.

Hermaios, who shared his power with a barbarian chief named Kujula-Kara-Kadphises, a member of the Great Yueh-chi horde, in the first century after Christ.



Coin of Heliokles.

During the interval sundry ruling families of foreigners appear in the frontier provinces, some of the princes having distinctly Parthian names. The details are too obscure and doubtful for discussion in this work.

**Gondophernes and St. Thomas.** The most interesting personage among those princes is Gondophernes, whose name is clearly Persian or Parthian. His reign may be placed between A.D. 20 and 48. He ruled an extensive realm which included Arachosia or the Kandahār country, Kābul, and the kingdom of

Taxila. The name of Gondophernes or Gondophares has become more or less familiar to European readers because early ecclesiastical legends, going back to the third century A.C., affirm that the apostle St. Thomas preached Christianity in his dominions and was there martyred. Another group of traditions alleges that the



Coin of Hermaios.

same apostle was martyred at Maillāpur (Mylapore) near Madras. Both stories obviously cannot be true; even an apostle can die but once. My personal impression, formed after much examination of the evidence, is that the story of the martyrdom in southern India is the better supported of the two versions of the saint's death. But it is by no means certain that St. Thomas was martyred

at all. An early writer, Heracleon the Gnostic, asserts that he ended his days in peace. The tale of his visit to the kingdom of Gondophares may have originated as an explanation of the early presence in that region of 'Christians of St. Thomas', disciples who followed the practices associated with the name of the apostle. Some



Coin of Gondophernes.

writers try to reconcile the two stories in some measure by guessing that St. Thomas may have first visited the kingdom of Gondophernes and then gone on to the peninsula. But that guess is no real explanation. The subject has been discussed by many authors from every possible point of view, and immense learning has been invoked in the hope of establishing one or other hypothesis, without reaching any conclusion approaching certainty. There is no reason to expect that additional evidence will be discovered.

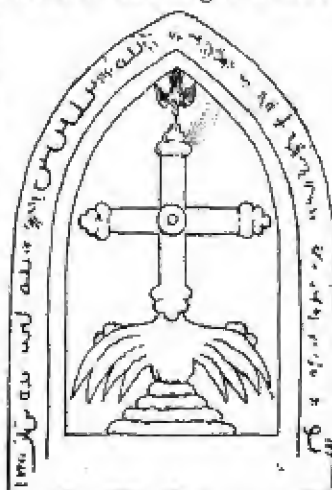
**The puzzle of Kushān dates.** The principal puzzle of Indian history still awaiting solution is that concerning the chronology of the powerful foreign kings of Kābul and north-western India who belonged to the Kushān clan or sept of the Yueh-chi horde of nomads. The most famous of those kings being Kanishka, the problem is often stated as being 'the question of the date of Kanishka'. Until it is solved, the history of northern India for three centuries or so must remain in an unsatisfactory condition. But definite progress towards a conclusive solution of the problem

based upon solid facts has been made. It may now be affirmed with confidence that the order of the five leading Kushān kings is finally settled,<sup>1</sup> and that the uncertainty as to the chronology has been reduced to a period of forty years in round numbers. Or to state it otherwise, the question is, 'Did Kanishka come to the throne in A. D. 78, or about forty years later ?'

When the third edition of the *Early History of India* was published in 1914, my narrative was based upon the working hypothesis that Kanishka's accession took place in A. D. 78 ; although it was admitted to be possible that the true date might be later. Further consideration of the evidence from Taxila now available leads me to follow Sir John Marshall and Professor Sten Konow in dating the beginning of Kanishka's reign approximately in A. D. 120, a date which I had advocated many years ago on different grounds. In the following narrative the correctness of that hypothesis will be assumed without any examination of the intricate archaeological evidence, which cannot be presented advantageously in a brief summary.

**The Yueh-chi migration.** The horde of nomads called the Great Yueh-chi, who were driven out of Western China between 174 and 160 B. C., migrated westwards along the road to the north of the Taklamakān (Gobi) desert. In the course of their long wanderings they encountered another nomad nation, the Sakai or Sakas (Se or Sai of the Chinese), who dwelt to the north of the Jaxartes or Syr Daryā river. The Sakai, being defeated by the Yueh-chi, were constrained to yield their pasture-grounds to the victors, and themselves to seek new quarters in the borderlands of India.

The victorious Yueh-chi, in their turn, were vanquished by a third horde named Wu-sun and driven from the lands which had been wrested from the Sakas. The Yueh-chi then settled in the valley of the Oxus, with their head-quarters to the north of the river,



Ancient cross, Kottayam.

<sup>1</sup> The five referred to are Kadphises I, Kadphises II, Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva I. The word Englished as Kushān appears in various forms in diverse scripts and languages. The long vowel in the second syllable is correct. The name of the sept in Khotanese may have been really Kuṣi or Kushi (nom. from stem Kuṣa) ; the word represented by 'Kushān' being a genitive plural. It would, perhaps, be more correct to speak of the Kushi (Kuṣi) sept, but I retain Kushān as being familiar and in accordance with the views of some scholars.

but probably exercising more or less authority over Bactria to the south.

**Kadphises I.** In the course of time, which cannot be defined precisely, the Great Yueh-chi horde lost their nomad habits and occupied the Bactrian lands, becoming divided into five principalities, at a date which cannot be determined with any approach to exactness. More than a century later, the Kushān section or sept of the Yueh-chi attained a predominant position over the other sections of the horde, under the leadership of a chieftain named Kujula-Kara-Kadphises, who is conveniently designated by modern historians as Kadphises I. He may be regarded as having become king of the Kushāns or Yueh-chi from somewhere about A. D. 40.<sup>1</sup>

Kadphises I was soon impelled to attack the rich territories to the south of the Hindu Kush, presumably finding the limits of Bactria too narrow for the growing population of his dominions.



Coin of Kadphises II.

He enjoyed a long life and prosperous reign, in the course of which he consolidated his strength in Bactria, and conquered the Kābul region south of the mountains. He annexed Ki-pin, which

may be interpreted with good reason as meaning Gandhāra, including the kingdom of Taxila to the east of the Indus, where he seems to have succeeded Gondophernes in A. D. 48. He also attacked the Parthians.

The operations indicated must have occupied many years, during which the Kushān or Indo-Seythian rule gradually replaced that of the Indo-Greek, Saka, and Indo-Parthian princes in the Indian borderlands. Kadphises I attained the age of eighty, and may be assumed to have died about A. D. 77 or 78.

**Kadphises II.** He was succeeded by his son Wima Kadphises, whose personal name is transliterated as Wēmo (Ooēmo) in his Greek coin legends, and is given as Yen-kao-ching by Chinese historians. It is convenient to designate him as Kadphises II. He set himself to accomplish the conquest of northern India, and effected his purpose. It is reasonable to believe, although strict proof is lacking, that the Saka era of A. D. 78 dates from the beginning of his reign, either from his actual accession or from his formal enthronement a little later. That hypothesis seems now to present less difficulties than any other. The evidence for the extent of the Indian conquests of Kadphises II is meagre and rests largely on the distribution of his extremely numerous coins.

<sup>1</sup> Between A. D. 25 and 81, but nearer to the earlier year, according to Franke, pp. 72, 73.

The abundance of his coinage certainly implies a long reign. He seems to have secured the supremacy in the Gangetic valley at least as far down as Benares, and also of the Indus basin. It may be that his power extended southwards as far as the Narbadā. The Saka satraps in Mālwa and western India appear to have owned him as their overlord.

**Collision with China.** The course of his conquests brought him into collision with the Chinese, who had first entered into relations with western Asia in the reign of the Emperor Wu-ti (140 to 86 B. C.), when an embassy under Chang-kien was dispatched from the Middle Kingdom to the powers on the Oxus. Chang-kien returned home about 120 B. C., the exact date being stated variously by different authorities. For some reason or other Chinese intercourse with the western regions ceased in A. D. 8; and when the first Han dynasty came to an end in A. D. 23, Chinese influence in those countries had been reduced to nothing.

Fifty years later Chinese ambition reasserted itself, and General Pan-chao, in the time from A. D. 73 to 102, advanced victoriously through Khotan and the other districts now called Chinese Turkistan and across Persia, until he carried his country's flag right into Parthia and to the shores of the Caspian Sea.

The advance through Khotan opened up the road to the south of the Taklamakān (Gobi) desert. The route to the north of that desert was cleared in A. D. 94 by the reduction of Kucha and Karāshahr.

**Chinese victory.** The progress of Chinese arms alarmed the Kushān monarch, namely Kadphises II, according to the chronology adopted in this chapter. In A. D. 90 he boldly asserted his equality with the Son of Heaven by demanding in marriage the hand of a Chinese princess. The proposal being resented as an insult, General Pan-chao arrested the Kushān envoy and sent him home. Kadphises II then prepared a formidable force of 70,000 cavalry under the command of his viceroy Si, which was dispatched across the Tsung-ling range or Tāghdumbāsh Pāmīr. The appalling difficulties of the route, involving the crossing of the Tāshkurghān Pass, 14,000 feet high, so shattered the Kushān host that when it emerged in the plain of either Kāshgar or Yarkand it was easily defeated. Kadphises II was compelled to pay tribute to China, and the Chinese annals note that in the reign of the Emperor Ho-ti (A. D. 89-105) the Indians often sent missions to China bearing presents which were regarded as tribute.

**Interval between Kadphises II and Kanishka.** The extensive issues of coin by Kadphises II prove, as already observed, that he enjoyed a reign of considerable length. But, inasmuch as his father, according to Chinese authority, had died at the age of eighty, it is unlikely that Kadphises II can have reigned for much more than thirty years. The close of his life and rule may be placed somewhere about A. D. 110. It is recorded that he appointed military governors to rule the Indian provinces, and it is possible that those officers controlled India for some years after his decease.

They may have issued the anonymous coins of the so-called Nameless King, who used the title of Sotēr Megas or Great Saviour, and certainly was closely associated with Kadphises II. Kanishka, the next king, was not a son of Kadphises II, his father's name being Vajheshka; and there is some reason for believing that he was a member of the Little Yuch-chi section of the horde, who seem to have settled in the Khotan region, whereas his predecessor was a Great Yuch-chi from Bactria. On the whole, it seems to be probable that an appreciable space of time intervened between the death of Kadphises II, which may be dated in or about A.D. 110, and the accession of Kanishka, which may be assigned to A.D. 120 approximately. Nothing is on record to show how the sceptre was transferred from the hands of Kadphises II to those of Kanishka.

**Era of Kanishka.** A new era running from the accession



Coin of Kanishka.

of Kanishka, or perhaps from his formal enthronement a little later, came into use in northern India, including Kābul. The regnal reckoning thus started either by Kanishka himself, or by his subjects, continued to be used by people in the reigns of his successors. Private inscriptions certainly so dated extend

from the year 8 to the year 99. Consequently, if the date of Kanishka's accession was known, the chronology of the period would exhibit few difficulties.

**Kanishka's dominions.** Kanishka is described as having been king of Gandhāra. The capital of his Indian dominions, and apparently the seat of his central government, was Purushapura or Peshāwar, where he erected remarkable Buddhist buildings. Portions of those edifices have been disclosed by the researches of the Archaeological Department. Kanishka in his earlier years annexed the valley of Kashmīr, consolidated his government in the basins of the Indus and Ganges, and warred with the Parthians. At a later date he avenged his predecessor's defeat in Chinese Turkistan. There seems to be no doubt that he succeeded in accomplishing the supremely difficult feat of conveying an effective army across the Pāmīrs and subduing the chiefs or petty kings in the Khotan, Yarkand, and Kāshgar regions who had been tributary to China. He exacted from one of those princes hostages who were assigned residences in the Panjāb and the Kābul province. Tradition affirms that Kanishka, who must have been then an old man, was smothered while on his last northern campaign by officers who had grown weary of exile beyond the passes. Kanishka spent most of his life in waging successful wars. While absent on his distant expeditions he left the government of the Indian province in the hands, first of Vāsishka, apparently his elder, and then of Huvishka, apparently his younger son. Those

princes, while acting as their father's colleagues, were allowed to assume full regal titles. Vāsishka evidently predeceased Kanishka, but Huvishka lived to ascend the imperial throne, which he occupied for at least twelve, and perhaps for twenty, years. No coins bearing the name of Vāsishka are known. The extensive and varied coinage of Huvishka may have been issued only after Kanishka's death, but it is possible that part of it was minted while Huvishka occupied the position of his father's colleague.<sup>1</sup>

The Chinese admissions that their information concerning the Western Countries was interrupted by the death in A. D. 124 of Pan-yang, the historian, who had succeeded his father Pan-chao as governor of Turkistan, and that Khotan was lost to the empire in A. D. 152 as the result of a local revolution in the course of which Governor Wang-king was killed, are in agreement with the belief that Kanishka established his suzerainty over the chiefs or petty kings of Chinese Turkistan between the years 125 and 160. The silence of Chinese annalists, as distinguished from Buddhist story-tellers, concerning Kanishka is explained by the well-known unwillingness of the historians of the Middle Kingdom to dwell on events discreditable to the imperial court.

**Kanishka's religion.** Modern research has disclosed the existence of a large number of inscriptions incised in the reigns of Kanishka and his successors, which give some indications of the extent of his dominions and other particulars concerning him. But his fame rests mainly on the fact that in the latter part of his career he became an active and liberal patron of the Buddhist church. Buddhist authors, writing for purposes of edification, consequently treat him as having been a second Asoka. We do not know what reasons induced Kanishka to show favour to the Buddhist church. The explanations given in the books look like an adaptation of the stories about the conversion of Asoka. Kanishka, as his coins prove, honoured a curiously mixed assortment of Zoroastrian, Greek, and Mithraic gods, to which Indian deities were added. We find the Sun and Moon with their Greek names, Hēlios and Selēnē (spelt 'Salēnē'), as well as Herakles. The moon again appears as an Iranian deity under the name of Māo. Other strangely named gods, obviously Iranian or Persian, are Athro, or Fire, Miho, or the Sun, Nāna, Oaninda, Lrooaspo, &c. The Indian Siva, who had already appeared in a two-armed form on the coins of the Parthian Gondophernes and the Great Yuch-chi,

<sup>1</sup> The theory stated in the text, first suggested by R. D. Banerji, is the only one adequate to explain the facts. The known dates include:

Kanishka—year 3 (Sarnāth); 18 (Mānikyāla); and 41 (Āra):

Vāsishka—with full titles, year 24 in words and figures (Isāpur, Mathurā); year ? 28 (Sānchi, probable); year 29 (Mathurā, possible):

Huvishka—year 33 (Mathurā); 51 (Wardak, W. of Kābul); and 60 (Mathurā):

Vasudeva—74 (Mathurā); 80, 83, 87, 98 (same place).

All the dated inscriptions were recorded by private persons; none are official.



Kadphises II, is seen on Kanishka's coins in both the two-armed and four-armed forms. Buddha (Boddo) is figured standing and clad in Greek costume; and also seated in the Indian manner. The queer assembly of deities offers an unlimited field for speculation. Perhaps it may be safely said that Kanishka followed the



Buddha coin of Kanishka.

practice of his Parthian predecessors in adopting a loose form of Zoroastrianism which freely admitted the deities of other creeds. We know that Indian monarchs, as for example, Harsha of Kanauj in the seventh century, often felt themselves at liberty to mix Buddhism with other cults; and it is probable that Kanishka, even after his alleged 'conversion', continued to honour his old gods. His successor, Huvishka, certainly did so. It is obvious that the character of Buddhism in north-western India and the neighbouring countries must have been profoundly modified by the lax practices to which the coinage of Kanishka and Huvishka bears witness.

**Kanishka's Council.** Kanishka followed the example set by Asoka in convening a Council of theologians to settle disputed questions of Buddhist faith and practice. The decrees of the Council took the form of authorized commentaries on the canon, which were engraved on sheets of copper, enclosed in a stone coffer, and placed for safety in a *stupa* erected for the purpose at the capital of Kashmir where the Council met. It is just possible that the documents may be still in existence and may be disclosed by some lucky excavation. The Buddhist sect which alone sent delegates to Kanishka's Council was formally classed as belonging to the *Hina-yāna*, or Lesser Vehicle, the more primitive form of Buddhism. But the cult actually practised more extensively in Kanishka's time was that usually associated with the *Mahā-yāna*, or Great Vehicle, as is clearly proved by the numerous sculptures of the age.

**Images of Buddha.** The early Buddhists, whose doctrines are expressed in the stone pictures of Sānchi and Barhut (Bharhut), did not dare to form an image of their dead teacher. When they wished to indicate his presence in a scene, they merely suggested it by a symbol, an empty seat, a pair of footprints, and so forth.

The Buddhists of the Kushān age had no such scruples. They loved to picture Gautama, as the Sage of the Sākya, the Bodhisattva, and the Buddha, in every incident of his last life as well as of his previous births. His image in endless forms and replicas became the principal element in Buddhist sculpture. The change obviously was the result of foreign influence, chiefly Greek (or more accurately, Hellenistic), and Persian or Iranian.

**Transformation of Buddhism.** The transformation of Buddhism which was effected for the most part during the first two or three centuries of the Christian era is an event of such significance in the history of India and of the world that it deserves exposition at some length. The observations following, which were printed many years ago, still express my opinion and are, I think, in accordance with the facts. Although they are rather long, it seems worth while to reprint them without material modification.

Buddhism had been introduced into the countries on the north-western frontier of India as early as the reign of Asoka in the third century B. C.; and in 2 B. C. an unnamed Yueh-chi chieftain was interested in the religion of Gautama so far as to communicate Buddhist scriptures to a Chinese envoy. Buddhist sculpture of some sort must have been known in those regions for centuries before the time of Kanishka, but it was not the product of an organized school under liberal and powerful royal patronage, so that remains of such early Buddhist art are rare. Probably the ancient works were executed chiefly in wood.

When the great monarch Kanishka actively espoused the cause of Buddhism and essayed to play the part of a second Asoka, the devotion of the adherents of the favoured creed received an impulse which speedily resulted in the copious production of artistic creations of no small merit.

The religious system which found its best artistic exponents in the sculptors of Kanishka's court must have been of foreign origin to a large extent. Primitive Buddhism, as expounded in the *Dialogues*, so well translated by Professor Rhys Davids, was an Indian product based on the Indian ideas of rebirth, of the survival and transmission of *karma*, or the net result of human action, and of the blessedness of escape from the pains of being.

Primitive Buddhism added to those theories, which were the common possession of nearly all schools of Indian thought, an excellent practical system of ethics inculcating a Stoic devotion to duty for its own sake, combined with a tender regard for the feelings of all living creatures, human or animal; and so brought about a combination of intellect with emotion, deserving the name of a religion, even though it had no god.

But when the conversion of Asoka made the fortune of Buddhism it sowed at the same time the seeds of decay. The missionaries of the imperial preacher and their successors carried the doctrines of Gautama from the banks of the Ganges to the snows of the Himalaya, the deserts of Central Asia, and the bazaars of Alexandria.

The teaching which was exactly attuned to the inmost feelings of a congregation in Benares needed fundamental change before it could move the heart of the sturdy mountaineer, the nomad horseman, or the Hellenized Alexandrian. The moment Indian Buddhism began its foreign travels it was bound to change. We can see the transformation which was effected, although most of the steps of the evolution are hidden from us.

**Influence of the Roman empire.** Undoubtedly one of the principal agencies engaged in effecting the momentous change was the unification of the civilized world, excepting India and China, under the sway of the Caesars.<sup>1</sup> The general peace of the Roman empire was not seriously impaired by frontier wars, palace revolutions, or the freaks of half-mad emperors. During that long-continued peace nascent Christianity met full-grown Buddhism in the academies and markets of Asia and Egypt, while both religions were exposed to the influences of surrounding paganism in many forms and of the countless works of art which gave expression to the ideas of polytheism. The ancient religion of Persia contributed to the ferment of human thought, excited by improved facilities for international communication and by the incessant clash of rival civilizations.

**Novel ideals.** In such environment Buddhism was transmuted from its old Indian self into a practically new religion. The specially Indian ideas upon which it had been founded sank into comparative obscurity, while novel ideals came to the front. The quietist teacher of an order of begging friars, who had counted as a glorious victory the recognition of the truth, as he deemed it, that 'after this present life there would be no beyond'; and that 'on the dissolution of the body, beyond the end of his life, neither gods nor men shall see him', was gradually replaced by a divinity ever present to the hearts of the faithful, with his ears open to their prayers, and served by a hierarchy of Bodhisattvas and other beings, acting as mediators between him and sinful men.

In a word, the veneration for a dead Teacher passed into the worship of a living Saviour. That, so far as I understand the matter, is the essential difference between the old Indian Buddhism, the so-called Hīna-yāna, and the newer Buddhism or Mahā-yāna. Although the delegates to Kanishka's Council were classed officially as Hīnayānists, the popular cult of the time unquestionably was the expression of Mahāyānist ideas, which were formulated and propagated by Nāgārjuna, who was to some extent the contemporary of Kanishka.

The age from A. D. 105 to 273, during which Palmyra flourished as the chief emporium for the commerce between East and West, and the Kushān kings ruled in north-western India, may be taken as marking the time when the Mahāyāna system was developed and the art forming its outward expression attained its highest achievement. It is hardly necessary to add that the movements of the human mind never fit themselves into accurately demarcated chronological compartments, and that all evolutions, such as that of the newer Buddhism, have had their beginnings long before

<sup>1</sup> I agree with Lüders that in the Āra inscription Kanishka took the title of 'Caesar' (*Kaśsarasa*); but, as it is possible to dispute the reading, it is better not to lay stress upon it. Kanishka's accumulated titles imply a claim to the sovereignty of the four quarters of the world (*Sitzungsber. d. Königl. Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaften*, 1912, p. 829).

the process of change becomes clearly visible. The rigorous doctrine of the earliest form of Buddhism was too chilly to retain a hold upon the hearts of men unless when warmed and quickened by human emotion. The Buddhism of the people in every country always has been different from that of the Canon, although the authority of the scriptures is nowhere formally disputed. When it is said that the development of the Mahāyāna was mainly the result of foreign influence, I must not be understood as denying that the germs of the transformed religion may have existed in India from a very early stage in the history of the Buddhist church.

**Literature and art.** In literature the memory of Kanishka is associated with the names of the eminent Buddhist writers Nāgārjuna, Asvaghosha, and Vasumitra. Asvaghosha is described as having been a poet, musician, scholar, religious controversialist, and zealous Buddhist monk, orthodox in creed, and a strict observer of discipline. Charaka, the most celebrated of the early Indian authors treating of medical science, is reputed to have been the court physician of Kanishka.

Architecture, with its subsidiary art of sculpture, enjoyed the liberal patronage of Kanishka, who was, like Asoka, a great builder. The tower at Peshāwar, built over the relics of Buddha, and chiefly constructed of timber, stood four hundred feet high.

The Sir Sukh section of Taxila hides the ruins of the city built by Kanishka, as yet almost unexplored. A town in Kashmir, still represented by a village, bore the king's name; and Mathurā (Muttra) on the Jumna was adorned by numerous fine buildings and artistic sculptures during the reigns of Kanishka and his successors. A remarkable portrait statue of Kanishka, unluckily lacking the head, has been found near Mathurā, with similar statues of other princes of his line. Those works do not betray any marks of Greek influence.

**The Gandhāra school.** Much of the Buddhist sculpture of



A KUSHĀN KING, FROM MĀT.

the time of Kanishka and his successors is executed in the style of Gandhāra, the province on the frontier which included both Peshāwar and Taxila. That style is often and properly called Graeco-Buddhist because the forms of Greek art were, applied to Buddhist subjects, with considerable artistic success in many cases. Images of Buddha appear in the likeness of Apollo, the Yaksha Kuvera is posed in the fashion of the Phidian Zeus, and so on. The drapery follows Hellenistic models. The style was transmitted to the Far East through Chinese Turkistan, and the figures of Buddha now made in China and Japan exhibit distinct traces of the Hellenistic modes in vogue at the court of Kanishka. The explorations of Sir M. A. Stein and other archaeologists have



Head of Bodhisattva.

proved that the Khotan region in Chinese Turkistan was the meeting place of four civilizations—Greek, Indian, Iranian, and Chinese—during the early centuries of the Christian era, including the reign of Kanishka. The eastward advance of the Roman frontier in the days of Trajan and Hadrian (A. D. 98–138) was favourable to the spread of Hellenistic ideas and artistic forms in India and other Asiatic countries. The Indo-Greek artists found their inspiration in the schools of Pergamon, Ephesus, and other places in Asia Minor rather than in the works of the earlier artists of Greece. In other words, the Gandhāra style is Graeco-Roman, based on the cosmopolitan art of Asia Minor and the Roman empire as practised in the first three centuries of the Christian era. Much of the

best work in that style was executed during the second century A. C. in the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka.

**Other sculpture.** Although the Gandhāra school of sculpture was the most prolific, the art of other centres in the age of Kanishka and Huvishka was not negligible in either quantity or quality. Sārnāth near Benares, Mathurā on the Jumna, and Amarāvati on the Krishnā (Kistna) river in the Guntūr District, Madras, offer many examples of excellent sculpture. Each of the three localities named had a distinctive style. The best known works are the elaborate bas-reliefs from Amarāvati, more or less familiar to all visitors to the British Museum from the exhibition of a series of specimens on the grand staircase of that institution. Tradition connects the buildings at Amarāvati with Nāgārjuna. The work there extended over many years, but most of it probably was executed in Huvishka's reign.

**Huvishka.** Huvishka or Hushka, presumably Kanishka's son,

who had governed the Indian provinces for many years on behalf of his father, while he was engaged in distant wars, succeeded to the imperial throne about A.D. 162. Little is known about the events of his reign. His coinage, which exhibits considerable artistic merit, is even more varied than that of Kanishka, and presents recognizable portraits of the king as a burly, middle-aged or elderly man with a large nose. The Yuch-chi princes had no resemblance to the 'narrow-eyed' Mongolians. They were big pink-faced men, built on a large scale, and may possibly have been related to the Turks. They dressed in long-skirted coats, wore soft leather boots, and sat on chairs in European fashion. Their language was an Iranian form of speech; and their religion, as we have seen, was a modified Zoroastrianism. The name of Huvishka was associated with a town in Kashmīr and with a Buddhist monastery at Mathurā. His coin types exhibit the strange medley of Greek, Indian, and Iranian deities seen on the coinage of Kanishka, but no distinctively Buddhist coins have been found. So far as appears, he retained possession of the extensive territories ruled by Kanishka. His death may be dated somewhere about A.D. 180 or 185. He must have been an old or elderly man, because his inscriptions, which overlap those of his predecessor, range from the year 33 to the year 60 of Kanishka's regnal era.

#### End of the Kushān empire.

Huvishka's successor was Vāsudeva I, in whose time the empire began to break up. The manner in which the Kushān power in India came to an end has not been clearly ascertained, but there is no doubt that Huvishka was the last monarch to maintain an extensive empire until his death. Such indications as exist concerning the decay of the empire are chiefly



BODHISATTVA.



GANDHĀRA FRIEZE.

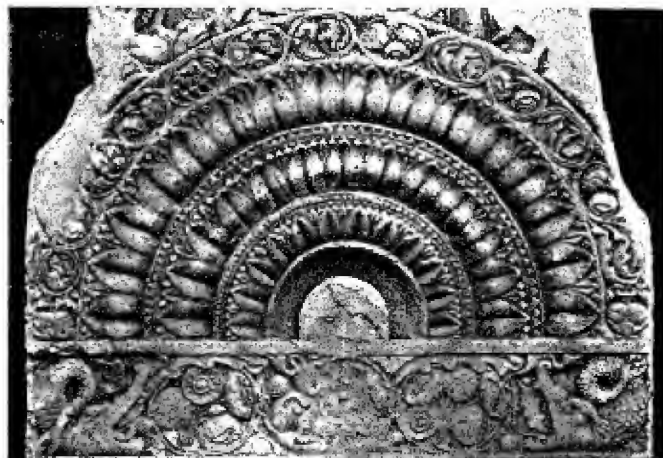
derived from the study of coins, and the inferences drawn from material so scanty are necessarily dubious. But it is certain that the coinage of the successors of Vāsudeva, some of whom bore the same name, became gradually Persianized, and the suggestion seems to be reasonable that the dissolution of the Kushān empire in India was connected in some way with the rise of the Sassanian power in A.D. 226, and the subsequent conquests of Ardashīr Pāpakān, the first Sassanian king, and his successors, which are alleged to have extended to the Indus, but without sufficient evidence. Strong Kushān dynasties continued to exist in Kābul and the neighbouring countries until the Ilun invasions of the fifth century; and some principalities survived even until the Arab conquest of Persia in the seventh century.

The name of Vāsudeva proves the rapidity with which the Kushāns had been changed into Hindus. Its form suggests the worship of Vishnu as Vāsudeva, but the coins bear the images of Siva and his bull, which had already appeared on the coins of Kadphises II. The history of the third century, whether religious or political, is too obscure and uncertain for further discussion in these pages.

**Greek influence.** The question as to the extent of Greek, or more accurately, Hellenistic influence upon Indian civilization is of interest, and always has been warmly debated by European scholars, who naturally desire to find links connecting the unfamiliar doings of isolated India with the familiar Greek ideas and institutions to which Europe owes so much. It will be well, therefore, to devote a few pages to the consideration of the facts bearing on the question. The trade relations between the Hellenistic world and India which existed for centuries, and will be noticed presently, are not relevant in this connexion. Such relations had little effect on the ideas or institutions of either India or Europe. The business people, then, as they usually do in all ages, confined themselves to their trade affairs without

troubling about anything else. They left no records, and, so far as appears, did not communicate much information to scholarly persons like Pliny and Strabo. If modern Europe had to depend upon Bombay and Calcutta merchants for its knowledge of India it would not know much.

**Effects of Alexander's campaign.** Alexander's fierce campaign produced no direct effects upon either the ideas or the institutions of India. During his brief stay in the basin of the Indus he was occupied almost solely with fighting. Presumably he was remembered by the ordinary natives of the regions which



MEDALLION, AMARAVATI.

he harried merely as a demon-like outer barbarian who hanged Brahmans without scruple and won battles by impious methods in defiance of the scriptures. The Indians felt no desire to learn from such a person. They declined to learn from him even the art of war, in which he was a master; preferring to go on in their own traditional way, trusting to a 'four-fold' army and hosts of elephants. When Chandragupta Maurya swept the Macedonian garrisons out of the Panjāb, that was the end of Hellenism on Indian soil for the time. The failure of the invasion by Seleukos Nikator a few years later secured India from all further Greek aggression.

**Maurya civilization.** Then followed seventy or eighty years of peaceful, friendly intercourse between the Maurya court and the Hellenistic princes of Asia and Africa, to which we are indebted for the valuable account of the Maurya empire compiled by Megasthenes. His book does not indicate any trace of Hellenic influence upon the political or social institutions of India. On



the contrary, the close agreement of the testimony recorded by the Greek ambassador with the statements of the Sanskrit books proves clearly that the Maurya government managed its affairs after its own fashion in general accordance with Hindu tradition,



Coin of Huvishka.

borrowing something from Persia but nothing from Greece. Even the Maurya coinage continued to be purely Indian, or at any rate Asiatic, in character. Asoka did not care to imitate the beautiful Bactrian issues, or to follow Greek example by putting his image and superscription on his coins. He was content to use

the primitive punch-marked, cast, or rudely struck coins which had formed the currency of India before his time.

In the domain of the fine arts some indications of the operation of Greek example and good taste may be discerned. The high quality of Maurya sculpture clearly was due to the happy blending of Indian, Iranian, and Hellenic factors.

It is reasonable also to connect Asoka's preference for the use of stone in building and sculpture with the opportunities which he

enjoyed for studying the Hellenistic practice of working in permanent material.



Coin of Vāsudeva.

The design of Indian buildings, so far as is known, rarely owed anything to Greek principles, but the excavations at Taxila suggest, or perhaps prove, that in some cases Greek models may have been imitated in that region.

Columns of the Ionic order undoubtedly were inserted in Taxilan buildings. Taxila, however, was half-foreign and only half-Indian, so that practices considered legitimate there would not have been approved in the interior provinces.

**Demetrios and others.** Direct contact between the Hellenistic states and the Panjāb was brought about early in the second century B.C., forty or fifty years after Asoka's death, by the conquests of the Bactrian sovereign Demetrios, 'King of the Indians'. The elephant's head on his coins is a record of his Indian connexions. A little later we find a king with the Greek name of Pantaleon striking coins in the square Indian shape, copied from the indigenous coinage of Taxila. About the same time Agathokles also adopted bilingual legends, first employed by Demetrios, giving his regal style in both Greek and a kind of Prakrit. The Indian tongue is inscribed in Brahmī, an old form of the script now called Nāgarī or Devanāgarī. Bilingual legends continued to be used by many kings.

**Coin types.** Antialkidas (c. 140–180 B.C.), the king of Taxila who sent Heliodoros as envoy to the Rājā of Besnagar, adopted the Indian standard of weight for his coins. The idea of striking coins with two dies, obverse and reverse, one side bearing the effigy and titles of the king, was foreign to India, and was gradually adopted by Indian princes in imitation of the issues minted by dynasties of foreign origin—Sakas, Parthians, Yuch-chi, and the rest. Indian artists, who attained brilliant success in other fields, never cared greatly about die-cutting, and consequently never produced a really fine coin. The best Indian coins, being a few gold pieces struck by the Gupta kings before and after A.D. 400 under the influence of western models, although good, are not first-rate, and do not bear comparison with the magnificent dies of the earlier Bactrian kings, not to speak of Syracusan masterpieces.



Coin of Pantaleon.

#### Indo-Roman gold coinage.

The Yuch-chi, Indo-Scythian, or Kushān kings of the first and second centuries A.C. evidently maintained active trade communications with the Roman empire, then far extended eastwards. Hence we find



Coin of Agathokles.

an unmistakable copy of the head of either Augustus or Tiberius on certain coins of Kadphises I, who seems to have made an alliance with Hermaios, the last Greek king of Kābul. Kadphises II carried much farther his imitation of Roman usage by striking an abundant

and excellent issue of gold coins agreeing closely with the Caesarian *aurei* in weight and not much inferior in fineness. Imported Roman coins have been often found in the Panjāb, Kābul, and neighbouring territories, but the bulk of the considerable inflow into India of Roman gold, as testified to by



Coin of Nero.

Pliny in A.D. 77, seems, so far as the northern kingdom was concerned, to have been melted down and reissued as orientalized *aurei*, first by Kadphises II, and afterwards by Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva. In peninsular India the Roman *aureus* circulated as currency, just as the British sovereign now passes current in

many lands. The gold indigenous currency of the south, introduced apparently at a later date, has never had any connexion with European models.

**Greek script and gods.** Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva used for their coin legends the Khotanese language, a near relative of the Saka tongue, but engraved it in a form of Greek characters only. For some reason or other they did not use any Asiatic script. The strange mixture of deities found in the coin types of Kanishka and Huvishka and the peculiarities of the Graeco-Buddhist school of sculpture have been sufficiently discussed above. The presumed influence of Hellenistic polytheism on the development of the later Buddhism has also been examined. The evidence of all kinds shows that, while foreigners like Heliodoros were ready to adopt Indian gods, the Indians were slow to worship Greek deities. The few Greek deities named on the Kanishka and Huvishka coins belonged also to the Persian pantheon and were taken over from the Parthians. The tendency certainly was for Indo-Greek princes and people to become Hinduized, rather than for the Indian Rājās and their subjects to become Hellenized. The Brahmanas were well able to take care of themselves and to keep at arm's length any foreign notions which they did not wish to assimilate.

**Scanty traces of Greek rule.** The visible traces of the long-continued Greek rule on the north-western frontier of India are surprisingly scanty, if the coin legends be excluded from consideration. No inscription in the Greek language or script has yet (1917) been found, and the Greek names occurring in inscriptions are few, perhaps half a dozen. Two records, one of which comes from Taxila, mention the District Officer serving under some Indo-Greek king by the designation of 'meridareh' (*μεριδάρης*), a detail which indicates the use of Greek for official purposes to a certain extent. Greek must have been spoken at the courts of the Indo-Greek kings, but the language does not seem to have spread among any Indian nation. The exclusive use of a Greek script to express Khotanese legends on the coins of Kanishka and his successors may be due, as has been suggested, to Khotanese having been first reduced to writing in the Greek character. The Greek lettering on the coins does not imply a popular knowledge of the Greek alphabet. Only a small proportion of the Indian population has ever been able to read coin legends, whatever the language or script might be. The coins of the ruling power for the time being are accepted as currency without the slightest regard to the inscriptions on them.

**Summary.** To sum up, it may be said that Greek or Hellenistic influence upon India was slight and superficial, much less in amount than I believed it to be when the subject first attracted me thirty years ago. If any considerable modification of the Indian religions was effected by contact with Hellenism, Buddhism alone was concerned, Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism remaining untouched. The remarkable local school of Graeco-Buddhist

sculpture in the Gandhāra frontier province, which was imitated to some extent in the interior, permanently determined the type of Chinese and Japanese Buddhist images. Some details of Hellenistic ornament became widely diffused throughout India. An undefinable but, I think, real element of Greek feeling may be discerned in the excellent sculpture of Asoka's age. If any buildings on a Greek plan were erected they were apparently confined to Gandhāra. Indian artists never produced fine coin-dies. Any at all good were copied from or suggested by Græco-Roman models. The Greek language never obtained wide currency in India, but must have been used to some extent at the courts of the border princes with Greek names. Many of those princes must have been of mixed blood. 'The Indo-Bactrian Greeks', it has been said, 'were the Goanese of antiquity.' The early medical knowledge as expounded by Charaka, Kanishka's physician, has been supposed to betray some acquaintance with the works of Hippocrates, but the proof does not seem to be convincing.

Long after the period treated in this chapter, western influence again made itself felt in Indian art, literature, and science during the rule of the Gupta emperors. That subject will be noticed in due course.

**Commerce by land.** Some reference has been made to the commerce between India and the Roman empire during the rule of the Kushān kings. The overland commerce of India with western Asia dated from remote times and was conducted by several routes across Persia, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor. Between A.D. 105 and 273 the principal dépôt of the trade was Palmyra or Tadmor in Syria. The Chinese silk trade followed the same roads.

**Commerce by sea.** The sea-borne trade of the peninsula with Europe through Egypt does not seem to have been considerable before the time of Claudius, when the course of the monsoons is said to have become known to the Roman merchants. But a certain amount of commerce with Egypt must have existed from much earlier days. In 20 B.C. we hear of a mission to Augustus from 'King Pandion', the Pāndya king of Madura in the far south. During the first and second centuries of the Christian era the trade between southern India and the Roman empire was extensive. Merchants could sail from an Arabian port to Muziris or Cranganore on the Malabar coast in forty days during July and August and return in December or January after transacting their business. There is reason to believe that Roman subjects lived at Muziris and other towns. The trade was checked, and perhaps temporarily stopped, by Caracalla's massacre of the people of Alexandria in A.D. 215. Payment for the Indian goods was made in *aurei*, of which large hoards have been found.

**Goods and ports.** The goods most sought by the foreign visitors were pearls from the fisheries of the Tāmraparni river in Tinnevely; beryls from several mines in Mysore and Coimbatore; corundum from the same region; gems of various kinds from

Ceylon; and pepper with other spices from the Malabar coast. The list is not exhaustive. The two principal ports on the Malabar coast were Muziris or Cranganore, and Bakarai or Vaikkarai, the haven of Kottayam, now in the Travancore State. Korkai on the Tāmraparni river was the principal seat of the pearl trade. Puhār, also called Pukār or Kāvēripaddinam, then at the mouth of the Kāvēri (Cauvery) river, was for some time a rich and prosperous port. It, with the other ancient ports in that region, is now desolate, a gradual elevation of the land having changed the coast-line.

**The Tamil states.** The Tamil states of the far south became wealthy and prosperous in virtue of their valuable foreign trade, and attained a high degree of material civilization at an early period. Megasthenes heard of the power of the Pāndya kingdom, and the names of the states are mentioned in Asoka's edicts. Boundaries varied much from age to age, but three principal powers, the Pāndya, Chera or Kerala, and Chola, were always recognized. Asoka named a fourth minor kingdom, the Kerala-putra, absorbed subsequently in the Pāndya realm, which was reputed the most ancient of the states, and may be described roughly as embracing the Madura and Tanjore Districts. The Kerala or Chera kingdom included the Malabar District with the modern Cochin and Travancore States, and sometimes extended eastwards. The Chola kingdom occupied the Coromandel or Madras coast. Cotton cloth formed an important item in the commerce of the Cholas, who maintained an active fleet, which was not afraid to sail as far as the mouths of the Irawaddy and Ganges, or even to the islands of the Malay Archipelago.

**Tamil literature.** During the early centuries of the Christian era Tamil was the language of all the kingdoms named, Malayālam not having then come into being. A rich literature grew up, of which the golden age may be assigned to the first three centuries A. C. Madura may be called the literary capital. The period indicated produced three works of special merit, the 'Kural' (Cural), the 'Epic of the Anklet', and the 'Jewel-belt'. The 'Kural' is described as being 'the most venerated and popular book south of the Godāvarī . . . the literary treasure, the poetic mouthpiece, the highest type of verbal and moral excellence among the Tamil people'. The author taught ethical doctrine of singular purity and beauty, which cannot, so far as I know, be equalled in the Sanskrit literature of the north. A few stanzas from Gover's excellent versions may be quoted :

### LOVE

Loveless natures, cold and hard,  
Live for self alone.  
Hearts where love abides regard  
Self as scarce their own. . . .

Where the body hath a soul,  
Love hath gone before.  
Where no love infills the whole,  
Dust it is—no more.

## PATIENCE

How good are they who bear with scorn  
And think not to return it !  
They're like the earth that giveth corn  
To those who dig and burn it. . . .

Though men should injure you, their pain  
Should lead thee to compassion.  
Do nought but good to them again,  
Else look to thy transgression.

**Dynastic history.** No continuous narrative of political events in the Tamil kingdoms can be constructed for the period dealt with in this chapter, or, indeed, until centuries later. But the literature gives a few glimpses of dynastic history. Karikkāl or Karikāla, the earliest known Chola king, whose mean date may be taken as A.D. 100, contemporary with Kadphises II, is credited with the foundation of Puhār or Pukār, and with the construction of a hundred miles of embankment along the Kāvēri river (Cauvery), built by the labour of captives from Ceylon. Almost continual war with the island princes is a leading feature in the story of the Tamil kingdoms for many centuries. It need hardly be added that the kings fought among themselves still more continuously. The first historical Pāndya king was contemporary more or less exactly with Karikāla Chola's grandson, with a certain powerful Chera monarch, and with Gajabāhu, king of Ceylon, who reigned in the last quarter of the second century, and gives the clue to the chronology. After that time no more dynastic history is possible until the Pallavas make their appearance in the fourth century.

# SYNCHRONISTIC TABLE OF THE FOREIGN DYNASTIES AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

(All Indian dates of events are merely approximate)

- B. C.  
c. 250-248. Revolts of Bactria and Parthia.  
c. 232. Death of Asoka.  
c. 208. Recognition of Bactrian independence.  
c. 200-190. Demetrios, 'King of the Indians'.  
c. 190-180. Pantaleon and Agathokles, kings of Taxila.  
c. 174-160. Western migration of the Great Yueh-chi from China.  
c. 180-160. Menander (Milinda), king of Kābul.  
c. 140-130. Antialkidas, king of Taxila; Helioekles, last Greek king of Bactria; invasions of Sakas, &c.  
c. 138. Conquest of kingdom of Taxila by Mithridates I, king of Parthia.

- B. C.
- c. 122-120. Return of Chang-K'ien to China.
- c. 95. Maues, Saka or Indo-Parthian king of Arachosia and Panjāb, acc.
- c. 58. Azes I acc. in same regions; 58-57, epoch of Vikrama era.
30. Roman conquest of Egypt.
- A. D.
14. Augustus Caesar died; Tiberius, Roman emperor, acc.
- c. 20-48. Gondophernes (Gondophares, &c.); king of Taxila, &c.; probably succeeded Azes II.
23. End of First Han dynasty of China.
- c. 40. Kadphises I (Kujula Kara Kadphises, &c.), Kushān, became king of all the Great Yueh-chi.
41. Claudius, Roman emperor, acc.
- c. 48. Kadphises I succeeded Gondophernes at Taxila.
- c. 77 or 78. Death of Kadphises I.
78. ? Kadphises II acc.; epoch of the Saka era.
- 80-105. Ho-ti, Chinese emperor.
- c. 90. Defeat of Kadphises II by Pan-chao, Chinese general.
98. Trajan, Roman emperor, acc.
105. Rise of Palmyra to importance.
- c. 110. Death of Kadphises II.
- c. 110-20. ? The 'Nameless King' in N.W. India.
116. Conquest of Mesopotamia by Trajan.
117. Hadrian, Roman emperor, acc.; retrocession of Mesopotamia.
- c. 120. Kanishka Kushān (? Little Yueh-chi) acc.; year 1 of his regnal era.
- c. 123. Sārṇāth inscription of Kanishka (year 3).
- c. 138. Mānikyāla inscription of Kanishka (year 18); Antoninus Pius, Roman emperor, acc.
- c. 144-50. Vāsishka, (?) son and viceregal colleague of Kanishka in India (year 24 to (?) 30).
- c. 150-62. Huviska, (?) son and viceregal colleague of Kanishka in India (years 30-42).
- c. 161. Āra inscription of Kanishka (year 41); Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor, acc.
- c. 162. Huviska succeeded Kanishka as Kushān emperor.
- c. 182. Vāsudeva I acc.
193. Septimius Severus, Roman emperor, acc.
- c. 194-218. Inscriptions of Vāsudeva I (years 74-98).
- c. 220. Death of Vāsudeva I.
226. Establishment of Sassanian dynasty of Persia by Ardashīr or Artaxerxes I.
240. Shāpur (Sapor) I acc. in Persia.
273. Destruction of Palmyra by Aurelian.

#### AUTHORITIES

References in addition to those in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914) might be given to numerous papers in the *J. R. A. S.* and other periodicals, which it would be tedious to specify. Special attention may be directed to Sir JOHN MARSHALL'S articles on Taxila in *J. P. H. S.*, vol. iii, and *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, for 1912-13. The exploration of the site will continue for years. Another notable contribution is Professor STEN KONOW'S paper

'Indoskythische Beiträge' in *Sitzungsber. d. königl. Preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaften*, 1910, a copy of which I was fortunate enough to receive through an official channel. The Besnagar pillar is discussed in *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, for 1908-9, in *Progr. Rep. A. S., Western Circle*, for 1914-15, and *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, for 1913-14.

*Buddhist China*, a good book by R. F. JOHNSTON (Murray, 1913), contains valuable observations on the development of Mahāyāna doctrines in India at an early date from Hīnayāna discussions and disputes. Professor POUSSIN discourses exhaustively on Bodhisattvas in Hastings, *Encycl. Rel. and Ethics*, s. v.

## CHAPTER 4

The Gupta period; a golden age; literature, art, and science; Hindu renaissance; the Haus; King Harsha; the Chalukyas; disorder in northern India.

**Definite chronology from A. D. 320.** The transition from the unsettled and hotly disputed history of the foreign dynasties to the comparatively serene atmosphere of the Gupta period is no less agreeable to the historian than the similar passage from the uncertainties of the Nandas to the ascertained verities of the Mauryas. In both cases the experience is like that of a man in an open boat suddenly gliding from the misery of a choppy sea outside into the calm water of a harbour.

The chronology of the Gupta period, taking that period in a wide sense as extending from A. D. 320, or in round numbers from A. D. 300, to A. D. 647, or the middle of the seventh century, is not only certain in all its main outlines, but also precise in detail to a large extent, except for the latter half of the sixth century.

It is possible, therefore, to construct a continuous narrative of the history of northern and western India for the greater part of three centuries and a half, without the embarrassment which clogs all attempts at narrative when the necessary chronological framework is insecure.

**Rise of the Gupta dynasty.** The exact course of events which brought about the collapse of the Indo-Scythian or Kushān empire in India at some time in the third century is not known. The disturbed state of the country seems to be the explanation of the lack of contemporary inscriptions or other memorials of the time, and of the hopeless confusion of tradition as recorded in books. Many independent states must have been formed when the control of a paramount authority was withdrawn. The Lichchhavis of Vaisālī, last heard of in the days of Buddha, now emerge again after eight hundred years of silence. It would seem that the clan or nation must have obtained possession of Pātaliputra, the ancient imperial capital, and have ruled there as tributaries or feudatories of the Kushāns, whose head-quarters were at Peshāwar. Early in the fourth century a Lichchhavi princess gave her hand to a Rājā in Magadha who bore the historic name of Chandragupta. The



matrimonial alliance with the Lichchhavis so enhanced his power that he was able to extend his dominion over Oudh as well as Magadha, and along the Ganges as far as Prayāg or Allahabad. Chandragupta recognized his dependence on his wife's people by striking his gold coins in the joint names of himself, his queen (Kumāra Dēvī), and the Lichchhavi nation.<sup>1</sup> He felt himself



Coin of Chandragupta I.

sufficiently important to be justified in establishing a new era, the Gupta, of which the year 1 ran from February 26, 320, presumably the date of his enthronement or coronation, to March 13, 321. The era continued in use in parts of India for several centuries. The reign of Chandragupta I was short, and may be assumed to have ended about A. D. 330. His

son and successor was always careful to describe himself as being 'the son of the daughter of the Lichchhavi', a formula implying the acknowledgement that his royal authority was derived from his mother.

**Samudragupta.** Samudragupta, the second Gupta monarch,<sup>2</sup> who reigned for forty or fifty years, was one of the most remarkable and accomplished kings recorded in Indian history. He undertook and succeeded in accomplishing the formidable task of making himself the paramount power in India. He spent some years first in thoroughly subduing such princes in the Gangetic plain as declined to acknowledge his authority. He then brought the wild forest tribes under control, and finally executed a military progress through the Deccan, advancing so far into the peninsula that he came into conflict with



Coin of Samudragupta.  
Horse-sacrifice type.

the Pallava ruler of Kānchī (Conjeeveram) near Madras. He then turned westward and came home through Khāndēsh, no doubt using the road which passed Asirgarh. That wonderful expedition must have lasted at least two or three years. Samudragupta did not attempt to retain permanently his conquests to the south of the Nerbādā, being content to receive homage from the vanquished princes and to bring back to his capital a vast golden treasure. He celebrated the *asvamedha* or horse sacrifice, which had been long

<sup>1</sup> That seems to me the natural interpretation of the coin legends. Mr. Allan, of the British Museum, regards the coins as having been struck by Samudragupta in honour of his parents, a view which I cannot accept.

<sup>2</sup> Kācha (Kaicha), who struck a few gold coins, may have intervened for a few months, if he was distinct from Samudragupta; but the best opinion is that they were identical.

in abeyance, in order to mark the successful assertion of his claim to imperial rank, and struck interesting gold medals in commemoration of the event.

**Samudragupta's empire.** At the close of Samudragupta's triumphal career his empire—the greatest in India since the days of Asoka—extended on the north to the base of the mountains, but did not include Kashmir. The eastern limit probably was the Brahmaputra. The Narbadā may be regarded as the frontier on the south. The Jumna and Chambal rivers marked the western limit of the territories directly under the imperial government, but various tribal states in the Panjāb and Mālwa, occupied by the Yaudhēyas, Mālavas, and other nations, enjoyed autonomy under the protection of the paramount power.

Tribute was paid and homage rendered by the rulers of five frontier kingdoms, namely Samatata, or the delta of the Brahmaputra; Davāka, perhaps Eastern Bengal; Kāmarūpa, roughly equivalent to Assam; Kartripura, probably represented by Kumaon and Garhwāl; and Nepāl.

**Relations with foreign powers.** Samudragupta further claims that he received respectful service from the foreign Kushān princes of the north-west, whom he grouped together as 'Saka chiefs', and even from the Sinhalese.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, therefore, that his name was known and honoured over the whole of India proper. He did not attempt to carry his arms across the Sutlaj or to dispute the authority of the Kushān kings who continued to rule in and beyond the Indus basin. The fact of the existence of friendly relations with Ceylon about A. D. 360 is confirmed by a Chinese historian who relates that King Meghavarman of Ceylon (c. 352-79) sent an embassy with gifts to Samudragupta and obtained his permission to erect a splendid monastery to the north of the holy tree at Bōdhī Gayā for the use of pilgrims from the island. The extensive mound which marks the site of the building has not yet been excavated.

**Personal gifts.** Samudragupta was a man of exceptional personal capacity and unusually varied gifts. His skill in music and song is commemorated by certain rare gold coins or medals which depict the king seated on a couch playing the Indian lute (*vīṇā*). He was equally proficient in the allied art of poetry, and

<sup>1</sup> The great inscription, which records in line 23 the rendering of 'acts of respectful service' by 'Daivaputra-Shāhi-Shāhānushāhi-Saka-murundas, Sinhalese, and others', must be interpreted in the light of modern research as meaning that the civilities were tendered by Meghavarman, king of Ceylon, and by sundry Kushān princes of the north-west, described collectively as 'Saka-murundas', or 'Saka chiefs', who used the styles of Daivaputra (=Chinese 'Son of Heaven'), Shāhi, or 'king'; and Shāhānushāhi or 'King of Kings'. *Shāhānu* is a genitive plural. See Konow's paper as cited in chap. 3. The Purāṇas treat the Murundas as distinct from the Sakas, but originally the word meant simply 'chief' = Chinese *wang*. In practice the name Murunda was employed to denote a section of the Sakas.



is said to have composed numerous works worthy of the reputation of a professional author. He took much delight in the society of the learned, whose services he engaged in the defence of the sacred scriptures. Although himself a Brahmanical Hindu with a special devotion to Vishnu, like the other members of his house, that fact did not prevent him from showing favour in his youth to Vasubandhu, the celebrated Buddhist author.

The exact date of Samudragupta's death is not known; but he certainly lived to an advanced age, and when he passed away had enjoyed a reign of apparently uninterrupted prosperity for nearly half a century.



Coin of Samudragupta.  
Lyrist type.

**Chandragupta II.** About

A.D. 375 he was succeeded by a son specially selected as the most worthy of the crown, who assumed his grandfather's name and is therefore known to history as Chandragupta II. Later in life he took the additional title of Vikramāditya ('Sun of power'), which was associated by tradition with the Rājā of Ujjain who is believed to have defeated the Sakas and established the Vikrama era in 58-57 B.C. It is possible that such a Rājā may really have

existed, although the tradition has not yet been verified by the discovery of inscriptions, coins, or monuments. The popular legends concerning 'Rājā Bikram' probably have been coloured by indistinct memories of Chandragupta II, whose principal military achievement was the conquest of Mālwa,



Coin of Chandragupta II.

Gujarāt, and Surāshtra or Kāthiāwār, countries which had been ruled for several centuries by foreign Saka chiefs. Those chiefs, who had been tributary to the Kushāns, called themselves Satraps or Great Satraps. The conquest was effected between the years A.D. 388 and 401. 395 may be taken as the mean date of the operations, which must have lasted for several years. The advance of the imperial arms involved the subjugation of the Mālavas and certain other tribes which had remained outside the frontier of Samudragupta, although enjoying his protection. Rudrasimha, the last of the Satraps, was killed. A scandalous tradition, recorded by an author of the seventh century, affirmed that the king of the Sakas, 'while courting another man's wife, was butchered by Chandragupta, concealed in his mistress's dress'. The reader is at liberty to believe or disbelieve the tale as he pleases.

**Trade with west; Ujjain.** The annexation of the Satraps' territories added provinces of exceptional wealth and fertility to the northern empire, which had become an extremely rich and powerful state at the beginning of the fifth century. The income from the customs duties collected at the numerous ports on the western coast which were now brought under Gupta rule must have been a valuable financial resource. From time immemorial Bharōch (Broach), Sopāra, Cambay, and a multitude of other ports had carried on an active sea-borne trade with the countries of the west. Ujjain appears to have been the inland centre upon which most of the trade routes converged. The city, dating from immemorial antiquity, which still retains its ancient name unchanged and exists as a prosperous town in Sindhia's Dominions,



Coin of Ujjain.

has been always reckoned as one of the seven sacred Hindu cities, little inferior to Benares in sanctity. Longitudes were reckoned from its meridian in ancient times. The favourable position of the city for trade evidently was the foundation both of its material prosperity and of the sanctity attaching to a site which enjoyed the

favour of successive ruling powers by whom religious establishments of all kinds were founded from time to time.

**The Great Satraps of Mahārāshtra.** Two distinct dynasties of foreign Saka princes using the style of Great Satrap ruled in western India, and should not be confounded by being lumped together under a single designation as the 'Western Satraps'.

The earlier dynasty ruled in Mahārāshtra or the region of the western Ghāts, its capital apparently being at or near Nāsik. The date of its establishment is not known, and so far the names of only two princes, Bhūmaka and Nahapāna, have been recovered, but others may have existed. About A.D. 117, during the assumed interval between the death of Kadphises II and the accession of Kanishka, an Āndhra king called Gautamīputra extirpated the line of Nahapāna and annexed the dominions of the dynasty, restriking their coins.

**The Great Satraps of Ujjain.** At nearly the same time, or probably a few years earlier, a chieftain named Chashtana became Great Satrap of Mālwa, with his capital at Ujjain. He must have been a subordinate of Kadphises II. His reign was not long, and his son did not come to the throne. Possibly both father and son may have been killed in battle, for the times were troubled. Chashtana's grandson, named Rudradāman, in or about A.D. 128, and certainly before A.D. 130, won afresh for himself the position of Great Satrap, presumably under the suzerainty of Kanishka, and became the ruler of western India, including the provinces which the Āndhra had wrested from the Satrap of Mahārāshtra a few years previously. Chashtana's successors must have continued to be tributaries of Huvishka. When the Kushān empire broke up, the rulers of the west, who continued to style themselves Great Satraps, be-

came independent, and preserved their authority until the twenty-first Great Satrap was killed by Chandragupta II at the close of the fourth century, when his country was incorporated in the Gupta empire, as already mentioned. The names and dates of the Great Satraps of Ujjain have been well ascertained, chiefly from coins, but little is known about the details of their history.<sup>1</sup>

**Character of Chandragupta II.** The principal Gupta kings, except the founder of the dynasty, all enjoyed long reigns, like Akbar and his successors in a later age. Chandragupta Vikramāditya occupied the throne for nearly forty years until A. D. 413. The ascertained facts of his career prove that he was a strong and vigorous ruler, well qualified to govern and augment an extensive empire. He loved sounding titles which proclaimed his martial prowess, and was fond of depicting himself on his coins as engaged in the sport of kings, personal combat with a lion. Lions were numerous in the northern parts of the United Provinces as late as the time of Bishop Heber in 1824, but are now found only in Kāthiāwār. The last specimen recorded in northern India was killed in the Gwālior State in 1872.

**Fa-hien, Chinese pilgrim.** The indispensable chronological skeleton of Gupta history constructed from the testimony of numerous dated inscriptions and coins is clothed with flesh chiefly by the help of foreign travellers, the pilgrims from China who crowded into India as the Holy Land of Buddhism from the beginning of the fifth century. Fa-hien or Fa-hsien, the earliest of those pilgrims, was on his travels from A. D. 399 to 414. His laborious journey was undertaken in order to procure authentic texts of the *Vinaya-pitaka*, or Buddhist books on monastic discipline. The daring traveller after leaving western China followed the route to the south of the Taklamakān (Gobi) Desert, through Sha-chow and Lop-nor to Khotan, where the population was wholly Buddhist, and chiefly devoted to the Mahāyāna doctrine.<sup>2</sup> He then crossed the Pāmirs with infinite difficulty and made his way into Udyāna or Suwāt (Swat), and so on to Taxila and Purushapura or Peshāwar. He spent three years at Pātaliputra and two at Tāmralipti, now represented by Tamlūk in the Midnapore District of Bengal. In those days Tāmralipti was an important port. Its modern successor is a small town at least sixty miles distant from the sea. Fa-hien sailed from Tāmralipti on his return journey, going home by sea, and visiting Ceylon and Java on the way. His stay in India proper, extending from A. D. 401 to 410, thus fell wholly within the limits of the reign of Chandragupta II. About six years were spent in the dominions of that monarch.

The enthusiastic pilgrim was so absorbed in the religious task to which his life was devoted, that he never even mentions the

<sup>1</sup> Much difference of opinion has been expressed concerning the date of Nahapāna, and the question has not been settled.

<sup>2</sup> The details of the pilgrim's route from Lop-nor to Khotan have not been worked out properly by any of the translators and are obscure; but he certainly passed Lop-nor.

name of any reigning sovereign. His references to the facts of ordinary life are made in a casual, accidental fashion, which guarantees the trustworthiness of his observations. Although we moderns should be better pleased if the pious traveller had paid more attention to worldly affairs, we may be thankful for his brief notes, which give a pleasing and fairly vivid picture of the condition of the Gangetic provinces in the reign of Chandragupta II. He calls the Gangetic plain Mid-India or the Middle Kingdom, which may be taken as equivalent roughly to the modern Bihār, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Mālwa, and part of Rājputāna. The whole of Mid-India was under the rule of the Gupta emperor.

**State of the country.** The towns of Magadha or South Bihār were large; the people were rich and prosperous; charitable institutions were numerous; rest-houses for travellers were provided on the highways, and the capital possessed an excellent free hospital endowed by benevolent and educated citizens. Pātaliputra was still a flourishing city, specially interesting to Fa-hien because it possessed two monasteries—one of the Little, and one of the Great Vehicle, where six or seven hundred monks resided, who were so famous for their learning that students from all quarters attended their lectures. Fa-hien spent three happy years at the ancient imperial capital in the study of the Sanskrit language and Buddhist scriptures. He was deeply impressed by the palace and halls erected by Asoka in the middle of the city, and still standing in the time of the pilgrim. The massive stone work, richly adorned with sculpture and decorative carving, seemed to him to be the work of spirits, beyond the capacity of merely human craftsmen. The site of that palace, somewhere in the heart of the modern city, has not yet been fully identified.

Pātaliputra probably continued to be the principal royal residence in the reign of Samudragupta, but there are indications that in the time of his successor Ajodhyā was found to be more convenient as the head-quarters of the government.

In the course of a journey of some 500 miles from the Indus to Mathurā on the Jumna the traveller passed a succession of Buddhist monasteries tenanted by thousands of monks. Mathurā alone had twenty such institutions with three thousand residents. Fa-hien noted that Buddhism was particularly flourishing along the course of the Jumna.

**Administration.** He liked the climate and was pleased with the mildness of the administration. He notes that people were free to come or go as they thought fit without the necessity of being registered or obtaining passes; that offences were ordinarily punished by fine only; the capital penalty not being inflicted, and mutilation being confined to the case of obstinate rebellion, meaning probably professional brigandage. Persons guilty of that crime were liable to suffer amputation of the right hand. The revenue was derived mainly from the rent of the crown lands, 'land revenue' in modern language. The royal guards and officers were paid regular salaries.

**Habits of the people.** The Buddhist rule of life was generally observed.

'Throughout the country', we are told, 'no one kills any living thing, or drinks wine, or eats onions or garlic . . . they do not keep pigs or fowls; there are no dealings in cattle, no butchers' shops or distilleries in their market-places.'

The Chandālas or outcastes, who did not observe the rules of purity, were obliged to live apart, and were required when entering a town or bazaar to strike a piece of wood as a warning of their approach, in order that other folk might not be polluted by contact with them.

Those observations prove that a great change had occurred in the manners of the people and the attitude of the government since the time of the Mauryas. The people of Taxila had had no scruple in supplying Alexander with herds of fat beasts fit for the butcher; even Asoka did not definitely forbid the slaughter of kine; while the *Arthashastra* not only treated the liquor trade as a legitimate source of revenue, but directed that public-houses should be made attractive to customers. Fa-hien's statements may be, and probably are, expressed in terms too comprehensive, and without the necessary qualifications. Sacrifice, for instance, must have been practised by many Brahmanical Hindus. It is hardly credible that in A. D. 400, 'throughout the whole country', nobody except the lowest outcastes would kill any living thing, drink strong liquor, or eat onions or garlic.<sup>1</sup> But Fa-hien's testimony may be accepted as proving that the *ahimsā* sentiment was extraordinarily strong in 'Mid-India' when he resided there. Evidently it was far more generally accepted than it is at the present day, when Buddhism has been long extinct. The pilgrim's statements, no doubt, apply primarily to the Buddhists, who seem to have been then the majority. The traveller's account of the precautions enforced on Chandāla outcastes in order to protect caste people from defilement may be illustrated by modern descriptions of the customs prevalent either now or not long ago in the extreme south of the peninsula; but it is not applicable to northern India in recent times; nor, so far as I know, can similar evidence for that region be quoted from any other author for any age. That remark does not imply disbelief of Fa-hien's positive statement on the subject. It merely means that the extreme rigour of caste rules directed against the possibility of personal pollution as described by the pilgrim has ceased to be observed in northern India for many centuries.

**Good government.** Fa-hien's incidental observations taken as a whole indicate that the Gupta empire at the beginning of the fifth century was well governed. The government let the people

<sup>1</sup> The assertion in the same chap. xvi that 'in buying and selling they use cowries' must not be pressed to mean that coins were unknown. Chandragupta II coined freely in gold, and more sparingly in silver and copper.



live their own lives without needless interference; was temperate in the repression of crime, and tolerant in matters of religion. The foreign pilgrim was able to pursue his studies in peace wherever he chose to reside, and could travel all over India without molestation. He makes no mention of any adventures with robbers, and when he ultimately returned home he carried to his native land his collections of manuscripts, images, and paintings. Many other Chinese pilgrims followed his example, the most illustrious being Hiuen Tsang or Yuan Chwang in the seventh century.

**Kumāragupta I.** In A.D. 413 Chandragupta II was succeeded



Coin of Kumāragupta I.

by a son named Kumāragupta who ruled the empire for more than forty years. Details of the events of his reign are not on record, but it is probable that he added to his inherited dominions, because he is known to have celebrated the horse-sacrifice, which he would not have ventured to do unless he had gained military successes.

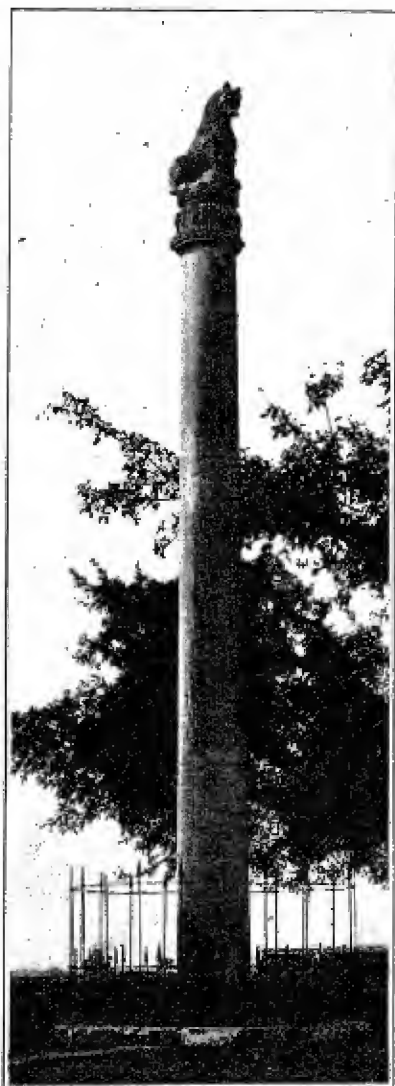
**Skandagupta, the last great Gupta.** He died early in A.D. 455, when the sceptre passed into the hands of his son Skandagupta. In the latter part of Kumāragupta's reign the empire had been attacked by a tribe or nation called Pushyamitra, perhaps Iranians, who were repulsed. Soon after the accession of Skandagupta a horde of Hūnas, or Huns, fierce nomads from Central Asia, made a more formidable inroad, which, too, was successfully repelled. But fresh waves of invaders arrived and shattered the fabric of the Gupta empire. The dynasty was not destroyed. It continued to rule diminished dominions with reduced power for several generations. Skandagupta, however, was the last of the great imperial Guptas, as Aurangzēb Ālamgīr was the last of the Great Moguls.

**The Gupta golden age.** Before we deal more closely with the Hun invasions and their consequences we shall offer a summary review of the golden age of the Guptas, which may be reckoned as extending from A.D. 320 to 480, comprising the reigns of Chandragupta I; Samudragupta; Chandragupta II, Vikramāditya; Kumāragupta I; and Skandagupta, who followed his grandfather's example in taking the title Vikramāditya.

A learned European scholar declares that 'the Gupta period is in the annals of classical India almost what the Periclean age is in the history of Greece'. An Indian author regards the time as that of 'the Hindu Renaissance'. Both phrases are justified. The age of the great Gupta kings presents a more agreeable and satisfactory picture than any other period in the history of Hindu India. Fa-hien's testimony above quoted proves that the government was free from cruelty and was not debased by the horrible system of espionage advocated by Kautilya and actually practised by the Mauryas. Literature, art, and science flourished in a degree

beyond the ordinary, and gradual changes in religion were effected without persecution. Those propositions will now be developed in some detail.

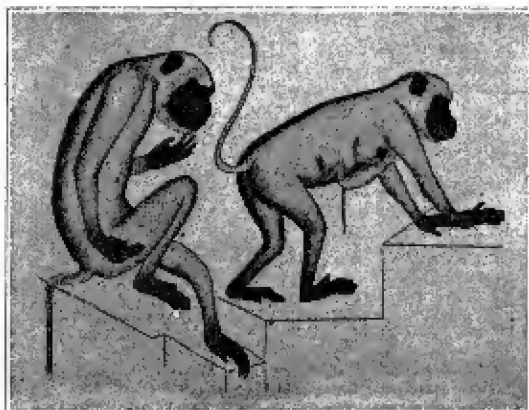
**Hindu renaissance.** The energetic and long continued zeal of Asoka probably succeeded in making Buddhism the religion of the majority of the people in northern India, during the latter part of his reign. But neither Brahmanical Hinduism or Jainism ever died out. The relative prevalence of each of the three religions varied immensely from time to time and from province to province. The Buddhist convictions of the Kushān kings, Kanishka and Huviska, do not seem to have been deep. In fact, the personal faith of those monarchs apparently was a corrupt Zoroastrianism or Magism more than anything else. Their predecessor, Kadphises II, placed the image of Siva and his bull on his coins, a practice renewed by Huviska's successor, Vāśudeva I. The Satraps of Ujjain, although tolerant of Buddhism, were themselves Brahmanical Hindus. The Gupta kings, while showing as a family preference for devotion to the Deity under the name of Vishnu or Bhagavata, allowed Buddhists and Jains perfect freedom of worship and full liberty to endow their sacred places. Although we moderns can discern from our distant point of view that the Hindu renaissance or reaction had begun the conquest of



Buddhism in the fifth century, LAURIYA-NANDANGARH PILLAR.

or even from an earlier date, Fa-hien was not conscious of the movement. India was simply the Buddhist Holy Land in his eyes, and the country in which the precepts of his religion were best observed.

**Sanskrit.** The growing power of the Brahmans, as compared with the gradually waning influence of the Jain and Buddhist churches, was closely associated with the increased use of Sanskrit, the sacred language of the Brahmans. Asoka never used Sanskrit officially. All his proclamations were composed and published in easily intelligible varieties of the vernacular tongue, and so were accessible to anybody who knew how to read. The Āndhra kings too used Prakrit. The earliest known inscriptions written in grammatical standard Sanskrit date from the time of Kanishka,



MONKEYS, AJANTA.

when we find a short record at Mathurā dated in the year 24 (= about A. D. 144), and a long literary composition at Gīrnār in Surāshtra, recorded about A. D. 152, which recites the conquests of the Great Satrap Rudradāman.

**Literature ; Kālidāsa.** The increasing use of Sanskrit is further marked by the legends of the Gupta coins, which are in that language, and by the development of Sanskrit literature of the highest quality. Critics are agreed that Kālidāsa surpasses all rivals writing in Sanskrit whether as dramatist or as poet. Something like general assent has been won to the proposition that the literary work of the most renowned of Indian poets was accomplished in the fifth century under the patronage of the Gupta kings. Good reason has been shown for believing that Kālidāsa was a native of Mandasār in Mālwa (now in Sindhia's dominions), or of some place in the immediate neighbourhood of that once famous town. He was thus brought up in close touch

with the court of Ujjain, and the active commercial and intellectual life which centred in that capital of western India. His early descriptive poems, the *Ritusamhāra* and the *Meghadūta*, may be assigned to the reign of Chandragupta II, Vikramāditya, the conqueror of Ujjain, and his dramas to that of Kumārāgupta I (A.D. 413-55); but it is probable that his true dates may be slightly later. *Sakuntala*, the most famous of his plays, secured enthusiastic admiration from European critics the moment it was brought to their notice, and the poet's pre-eminence has never been questioned in either East or West.<sup>1</sup>



WOMAN AND CHILD, AJANTĀ.

**Other literature.** Good authorities are now disposed to assign the political drama entitled the 'Signet of the Minister' (*Mudrā Rākshasa*) to the reign of Chandragupta II, Vikramāditya; and the interesting play called 'The Little Clay Cart' (*Mṛichchhakatika*) may be a little earlier. The *Vāyu Purāṇa*, one of the most ancient of the existing Purāṇas, may be assigned to the first half of the fourth century in its present form. All the Purāṇas contain matter of various ages, some parts being extremely ancient; any date assigned to such a composition refers only to the final literary form of the work.

<sup>1</sup> For Kālidāsa's birthplace see M. M. Harapārshad Shastri in *J. B. & O. R. Soc.*, vol. i, pp. 197-212. I accept the continuous tradition that the *Ritusamhāra* is an early work of Kālidāsa.



COLUMN, GUPTA PERIOD.

The eminent Buddhist author, Vasubandhu, lived in the reigns of Chandragupta I and Samudragupta, dying in the third quarter of the fourth century. Samudragupta, while prince and passing under the name of Chandraprakāsa, was intimate with Vasubandhu, who attended his father's court.

**Science.** The sciences of mathematics and astronomy, including astrology, were cultivated with much success during the Gupta period. The most famous writers on those subjects are Āryabhaṭa, born in A.D. 476, who taught the system studied at Pāṭaliputra, and including Greek elements; Varāhamihira (A.D. 505-87), who was deeply learned in Greek science and used many Greek technical terms; and, at the close of the period, Brahmagupta, who was born in A.D. 598.

**Fine arts.** The skill of Samudragupta in music has been recorded. We may be assured that the professors of that art, as the recipients of liberal royal patronage, were numerous and prosperous. The three closely allied arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting attained an extraordinarily high point of achievement. The accident that the Gupta empire consisted for the most part of the provinces permanently occupied at an early date by the Muhammadans, who systematically destroyed Hindu buildings for several centuries, obscures the history of Gupta architecture. No large building of the period has survived, and the smaller edifices which escaped destruction are hidden in remote localities away from the track of the Muslim armies, chiefly in Central India

and the Central Provinces. They closely resemble rock-cut temples.

The most important and interesting extant stone temple of Gupta age is one of moderate dimensions at Dēogarh in the Lalitpur subdivision of the Jhānsi District, U.P., which may be assigned to the first half of the sixth, or perhaps to the fifth, century. The panels of the walls contain some of the finest specimens of Indian sculpture. The larger brick temple at Bhītargāon in the Cawnpore District, U.P., may be ascribed to the reign of Chandra-



HIPPOGRYPH, GUPTA.

gupta II. It is remarkable for vigorous and well-designed sculpture in terra-cotta. Fragments, including some beautiful sculptures, indicate that magnificent stone temples of Gupta age stood at Sārṇāth near Benares and elsewhere. Sārṇāth has proved to be a treasure-house of Gupta figures and reliefs, among which are many of high quality dating from the time of Samudragupta and his successors. The Gupta artists and craftsmen were no less capable in working metals. The pillar at Delhi, made of wrought iron in the time of Samudragupta, is a marvel of metallurgical skill. The art of casting copper statues on a large scale by the *cire perdue* process was practised with conspicuous success. A copper image of Buddha about 80 feet high was erected at Nālandā in Bihār at the close of the sixth century; and the fine Sultān-ganj Buddha, 7½ feet high, is still to be seen in the Museum at Birmingham. It dates from the reign of Chandragupta II. The highest development of the arts may be assigned to the fifth century, the age of Kālidāsa, in the reigns of Chandragupta II and his son. Two of the finest caves at Ajantā, Nos. XVI and XVII, were excavated in the same century of brilliant achievement.<sup>1</sup> It is needless to dwell upon the high merits of the paintings in the Ajantā caves, which are now freely recognized. A Danish artist, who has published a valuable professional criticism, declares that 'they represent the climax to which genuine Indian art has attained'; and that 'everything in these pictures from the composition as a whole to the smallest pearl

<sup>1</sup> J. R. A. S., 1914, p. 835.

or flower testifies to depth of insight coupled with the greatest technical skill.<sup>1</sup>

The closely related frescoes at Sigiriya in Ceylon were executed between A.D. 479 and 497, soon after the close of the reign of Skandagupta.

**Hindu art at its best.** The facts thus indicated in outline permit no doubt that the fine arts of music, architecture, sculpture, and painting attained a high level of excellence during the Gupta period, and more especially in the fifth century, which in my judgement was the time when Hindu art was at its best. The Gupta sculpture exhibits pleasing characteristics which usually enable a student familiar with standard examples to decide with confidence whether or not a given work is of Gupta age. The physical beauty of the figures, the gracious dignity of their attitude, and the refined restraint of the treatment are qualities not to be found elsewhere in Indian sculpture in the same degree. Certain more obvious technical marks are equally distinctive. Such are the plain robes showing the body as if they were transparent, the elaborate haloes, and the curious wigs. Others might be enumerated. Many of the sculptures are dated.

**Exchange of ideas.** The extraordinary intellectual vitality of the Gupta period undoubtedly was largely due to the constant and lively exchange of ideas with foreign lands in both East and West. Between A.D. 357 and 571 we read of ten embassies or missions, some probably only of a commercial character, which were sent to China from one part of India or the other. The stream of Buddhist pilgrims from the Celestial Empire, set in motion by Fa-hien, continued to flow, while, in return, another stream of Indian sages flowed to China. One of the earliest of such travellers was Kumārajīva in A.D. 383. Active communication between the Indian coasts and the islands of the Archipelago was maintained. The Chinese say that the conversion of the Javanese to Buddhism was effected by Gunavarman, Crown Prince of Kashmir, who died at Nanking in China in A.D. 431. The Ajantā frescoes record intercourse between western India and Persia early in the seventh century. Three missions to Roman emperors in A.D. 336, 361, and 530 are mentioned. The coinage bears unmistakable testimony to the reality of Roman influence, and the word *denār*, the Latin *denarius*, was commonly used to mean a gold coin.

The conquest of western India by Chandragupta II at the close of the fourth century brought the Gangetic provinces into direct communication with the western ports, and so with Alexandria and Europe. Trade also followed the land routes through Persia. The effect of easy communication with Europe is plainly visible in the astronomy of Āryabhata and Varāhamihira, who must have known Greek. The belief of Windisch that the many striking resemblances in form between the classical Indian dramas and the plays of the school of Menander are not accidental rests on sub-

<sup>1</sup> *Ann. Rep. Archaeol. Dept. Nizam's Dom.*, for 1914-15, App. H, by Axel Jarl.

stantial arguments. The influence of Greek taste on the sculpture of the Gupta age, although necessarily less obvious, is not less certain. The works are truly Indian. They are not copies or even imitations of Greek originals, and yet manifest the Greek spirit, forming a charming combination of East and West, such as we see on a vast scale in the inimitable Tāj many centuries later. When the intercourse with Europe died away in the seventh century India developed new schools of sculpture in which no trace of foreign example can be detected. Some expert critics maintain that the works of the eighth century mark the highest achievement of Indian art; but those of the fifth century commend themselves, as already observed, to my taste, and appear to me to be on the whole superior to those of any other age.

**The Huns.** The meagre annals of the Gupta monarchs subsequent to Skandagupta present little matter of interest, and may be passed by with a mere allusion. But the nature of the foreign inroads which broke down the stately fabric of the Gupta empire demands explanation. The work of destruction was effected by hordes of nomads from Central Asia who swarmed across the north-western passes, as the Sakas and Yuch-chi had done in previous ages. The Indians generally spoke of all the later barbarians as Hūnas or Huns, but the Huns proper were accompanied by Gurjaras and other tribes. The section which encamped in the Oxus valley in the fifth century was distinguished as the White Huns or Ephthalites. They gradually occupied both Persia and Kābul, killing the Sassanian king Fīrōz in A.D. 484. Their first attack on the Gupta empire about A.D. 455 was repulsed, but the collapse of Persian resistance opened the flood-gates and allowed irresistible numbers to pour into India. Their leader, Toramāna, who was established in Mālwa in A.D. 499 or 500, was succeeded about A.D. 502 by his son Mihiragula ('Sun-flower'), whose Indian capital appears to have been Śākala or Siālkōt in the Panjāb.



Coin of Toramāna.

India at that time was only one province of the Hun empire which extended from Persia on the west to Khotan on the east, comprising forty provinces. The head-quarters of the horde were at Bāmyin near Herat, and the ancient city of Balkh served as a secondary capital. The power of Mihiragula in India was broken about A.D. 528 by Yasodharman, king of Mālwa, helped perhaps by the Gupta king of Magadha. Mihiragula retired to Kashmīr, where he seized the throne, and died. His history is obscured by fanciful legends.

Soon after the middle of the sixth century the Hun kingdom on the Oxus was overthrown by the Turks, who became masters of the greater part of the short-lived Hun empire.

**A turning-point in history.** The barbarian invasions of the



fifth and sixth centuries, although slurred over by the Indian authorities, constitute a turning-point in the history of northern and western India, both political and social. The political system of the Gupta period was completely broken up, and new kingdoms were formed. No authentic family or clan traditions go back beyond the Hun invasions. All genuine tradition of the earlier dynasties has been absolutely lost. The history of the Mauryas, Kushāns, and Guptas, so far as it is known, has been recovered laboriously by the researches of scholars, without material help from living tradition.<sup>1</sup> The process by which the foreigners became Hinduized and the Rājput clans were formed will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Valabhī and other kingdoms.** When the Gupta power became restricted at the close of the fifth century western India gradually passed under the control of rulers belonging to a foreign tribe called Maitraka, possibly Iranian in origin. The Maitrakas established a dynasty with its capital at Valabhī (Walā, or Vālā of *I. G.*, Wulhubheepoor of the *Rās Mala*), in the Surāshtra peninsula, which lasted until about 770. when it seems to have been overthrown by the Arabs. The names and dates of the long line of the kings of Valabhī, who used the Gupta era, are known with sufficient accuracy. The kingdom attained considerable wealth and importance. In the sixth century the capital was the residence of renowned Buddhist teachers, and in the seventh it rivalled Nālandā in Bihār as a centre of Buddhist learning. The modern town is insignificant and shows few signs of its ancient greatness.

After the overthrow of Valabhī its place as the chief city of western India was taken by Anhilwāra (Nahrwālah, &c., or Pātan), which in its turn was superseded in the fifteenth century by Ahmadābād.

The Gurjaras, who have been mentioned as associated with the Huns, founded kingdoms at Bharōch (Broach) and at Bhinmāl in southern Rājputāna.

The history of India during the sixth century is exceedingly obscure. The times evidently were much disturbed.

About the middle of that century a chief belonging to the Chalukya clan, which probably was connected with the Gurjaras and had emigrated from Rājputāna, founded a principality at Vātāpi, the modern Bādāmi in the Bijāpur District, Bombay, which developed into an important kingdom in the early years of the seventh century, and became for a time the leading power in the Deccan, which will be noticed more particularly in a later chapter.

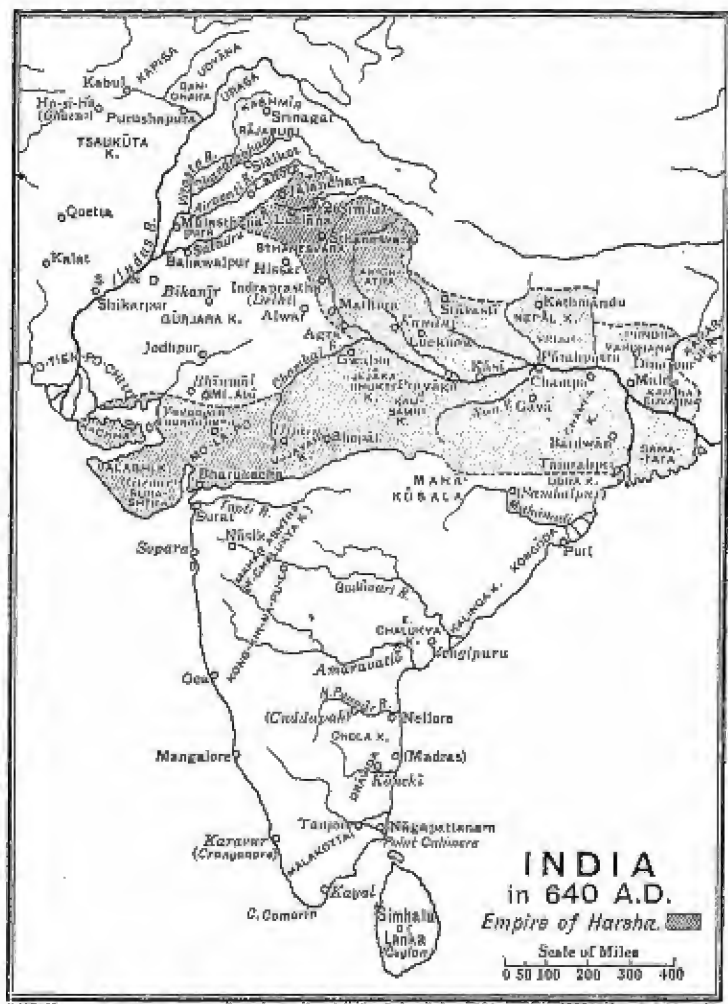
Nothing definite of moment can be stated about the Tamil kingdoms of the Far South during the period dealt with in this chapter.

**Ample material for seventh century.** The embarrassing

<sup>1</sup> The Jain traditions of Samprati constitute a small exception to the statement in the text.

lack of material for the history of the latter half of the sixth century is no longer felt when the story of the seventh has to be told. The invaluable description of India recorded by Hiuen Tsang or Yuan Chwang, the eminent Chinese pilgrim; his biography written by his friends; the official Chinese historical works; and an historical romance composed by Bāna, a learned Brāhman who enjoyed the friendship of King Harsha, when combined with a considerable amount of information derived from inscriptions, coins, and other sources, supply us with knowledge surpassing in fullness and precision that available for any other period of early Hindu history, except that of the Mauryas. Harsha of Kanauj, the able monarch who reduced anarchy to order in northern India, and reigned for forty-one years, as Asoka had done, is not merely a name in a genealogy. His personal characteristics and the details of his administration, as recorded by men who knew him intimately, enable us to realize him as a living person who achieved greatness by his capacity and energy.

**King Harsha, A. D. 606-47.** Harsha, or Harsha-var dhana, was the younger son of Prabhākara-var dhana, Rājā of Thānēsar, the famous holy town to the north of Delhi, who had won considerable military successes over his neighbours—the Gurjaras, Mālavas, and others, in the latter part of the sixth century. His unexpected death in A. D. 604 was quickly followed by that of his elder son, who was treacherously assassinated by Sasānka, king of Gaura, or Central Bengal. His younger son, Harsha, then only sixteen or seventeen years of age, was constrained by his nobles to accept the vacant throne, and to undertake the difficult task of bringing northern India into subjection and tolerable order. The young sovereign, who reluctantly accepted the trust imposed upon him in October 606, was obliged to spend five years and a half in constant fighting. The Chinese pilgrim who came to India a few years later tells us that during that strenuous time Harsha 'went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted'. His conquests were achieved with a force of 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry. He seems to have discarded chariots. When he had finished his task the cavalry had increased to 100,000, and the elephants are said to have numbered 60,000, a figure hardly credible, and probably erroneous. Harsha's subjugation of upper India, excluding the Panjāb, but including Bihār and at least the greater part of Bengal, was completed in 612, when he appears to have been solemnly enthroned. But the new era established by him, which attained wide currency, was reckoned from the beginning of his reign in October 606. His last recorded campaign in 648 was directed against Ganjām on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. A few years earlier he had waged a successful war with Valabhi, which resulted in the recognition of Harsha's suzerainty by the western powers. In the east his name was so feared that even the king of distant Assam was obliged to obey his imperious commands and to attend his court.



WANTYPE

GEORGE PHILIP & SON, LTD.

MAP OF INDIA, A. D. 640.

**War with the Chalukyas.** The Chalukya kingdom in the Deccan, founded, as has been mentioned, in the middle of the sixth century, was raised to a paramount position by its king, Pulakesin II, the contemporary of Harsha. The northern monarch, impatient of a rival, attacked Pulakesin about A.D. 620, but was defeated, and obliged to accept the Narbadā as his southern frontier. So far as is known that defeat was Harsha's only failure. During the greater part of his reign, although his armies may have been given occupation from time to time, he was free to devote his exceptional powers to the work of administration and to consecrate an extraordinarily large share of his time to religious exercises and discussions.

**Kanauj the capital.** The ancient town of Kanauj (Kanyā-kubja) on the Ganges, which was selected by Harsha as his capital, was converted into a magnificent, wealthy, and well-fortified city, nearly four miles long and a mile broad, furnished with numerous lofty buildings, and adorned with many tanks and gardens. The Buddhist monasteries, of which only two had existed in the fifth century, numbered more than a hundred in Harsha's time, when Brahmanical temples existed in even larger numbers. The inhabitants were more or less equally divided in their allegiance to Hinduism and Buddhism. The city, after enduring many vicissitudes, was finally destroyed by Shēr Shāh in the sixteenth century. It is now represented by a petty Muhammadan country town and miles of shapeless mounds which serve as a quarry for railway ballast. No building erected in Harsha's reign can be identified either at Kanauj or elsewhere.

**Administration ; literature.** Harsha, who was only forty-seven or forty-eight years of age when he died late in A.D. 646 or early in 647, was in the prime of life throughout his long reign. We hear nothing of the elaborate bureaucratic system of the Mauryas, although an organized civil service must have existed. The king seems to have trusted chiefly to incessant personal supervision of his extensive empire, which he effected by constantly moving about, except in the rainy season when the roads were impassable. He marched in state to the music of golden drums, and was accommodated, like the Burmese kings of modern times, in temporary structures built of wood and bamboos, which were burnt on his departure. Many provinces were governed in detail by tributary Rājās. The Chinese pilgrim thought well of the royal administration, although it was less mild than that of the Guptas in the fifth century. The penalty of imprisonment, inflicted after the cruel Tibetan fashion, which left the prisoner to live or die, was freely awarded, and mutilation was often adjudged. The roads, apparently, were not as safe as they had been in the days of Vikramāditya. Official records of all events were kept up in each province by special officers. Education was widely diffused, and the great Buddhist monasteries at Nalāndā in Magadha and other places were centres of learning and the arts. The king himself was an accomplished scholar. He is credited with the composition



people, and religion, which entitle him to be called 'the Indian Pausanias'.<sup>1</sup>

He returned by the southern route, crossing the Pāmīrs, and passing Kāshgar, Yarkand, Khotan, and Lop-nor—a truly wonderful journey. Eight years, 635 to 643, had been mostly spent in Harsha's dominions. Early in 645 he reached his native land, bringing with him a large and valuable collection of manuscripts, images, and relics. He occupied the remainder of his life in working up the results of his expedition with the aid of a staff of scholars, and died in 664 at the age of sixty-four or sixty-five. His high character, undaunted courage, and profound learning deservedly won the respect and affection of the Chinese emperor and all his people. The memory of the Master of the Law, the title bestowed upon him by universal consent, is still as fresh in Buddhist lands as it was twelve hundred years ago.

It is impossible to overestimate the debt which the history of India owes to Hsuen Tsang.

**Assemblies at Kanauj and Prayāg.** King Harsha, who was in camp in Bengal when he first met the Master, organized in his honour a splendid assembly at Kanauj the capital, which was attended by twenty tributary Rājās, including the King of Assam from the extreme east, and the King of Valabhī from the extreme west. After the close of the proceedings at Kanauj, Harsha carried his honoured guest with him to Prayāg (Allahabad), where another crowded assembly was held, and the royal treasures were distributed to thousands of the holy men of all the Indian religions, Brahmanical, Jain, and Buddhist. On the first day the image of Buddha received honours of the highest class, the effigies of the Sun and Sīva being worshipped respectively on the second and third days with reduced ceremonial. The assembly at Prayāg in 643 was the sixth of its kind, it being Harsha's custom to distribute his accumulated riches at intervals of five years. He did not live to see another celebration. The pilgrim was dismissed with all honour and presented with lavish gifts.

**Death of Harsha; results.** Either late in 646 or early in 647 the king died, leaving no heir. The withdrawal of his strong arm threw the whole country into disorder, which was aggravated by famine.

Then a strange incident happened. A Chinese envoy named Wang-hsien-tse was at Harsha's court, attended by an escort of thirty men. A minister who had usurped the vacant throne attacked the envoy, plundered his goods, and killed or captured

<sup>1</sup> See map prepared by the author at the end of vol. ii of Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (1905). For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with Greek history it may be mentioned that Pausanias travelled through Greece in the second century A. C. and recorded his detailed observations in the form of an *Itinerary* divided into ten books. The Chinese pilgrim's *Travels* or *Records of Western Lands* comprise 12 books (*chuan*); but the last three books, equivalent to chaps. xvi-xviii of Watters, seem to be interpolated and are of inferior authority (Watters, ii, 233).

the men of his escort. Wang-hiuen-tse succeeded in escaping to Nepāl, which was then tributary to Tibet. The Tibetan king, the famous Srong-tsan Gampo, who was married to a Chinese princess, assembled a force of Tibetans and Nepalese, who descended into the plains, stormed the chief city of Tihūt, defeated the Indian army with great slaughter, and captured the usurper with his whole family. The captive was sent to China, where he died. Tihūt remained subject to Tibet until A.D. 703.

The death of Harsha having loosened the bonds which had held his empire together, the experiences of the third and sixth centuries were repeated, and a rearrangement of kingdoms was begun, of which the record is obscure. It is impossible to say exactly what happened in most of the provinces for a considerable time after his disappearance from the scene.

His rival, Pulakesin II, Chalukya, who had successfully defended the Deccan against aggression from the north, had met his fate five years before Harsha's death. He was utterly defeated and presumably killed in 642 by Narasimha-varman, the Pallava king of Kānchī or Conjeeveram in the far south, who thus became the paramount sovereign of the peninsula. The story will be told from the southern point of view in a later chapter.

**Unity of history lost.** The partial unity of Indian history vanishes with Harsha and is not restored in any considerable measure until the closing years of the twelfth century, when the extensive conquests effected by and for Muhammad of Ghōr brought the most important provinces under the sway of the Sultans of Delhi. The story of Hindu India from the middle of the seventh century until the Muhammadan conquest, which may be dated approximately in A.D. 1200 for the north and A.D. 1300 for the south, cannot be presented in the form of a single continuous narrative. The subject will be treated in Book III.

## CHRONOLOGY

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| A. D.       |  |
| 320.        | Chandragupta I, acc. ; epoch of the Gupta era.                     |
| c. 330.     | Samudragupta, acc.   |
| c. 360.     | Embassy from Meghavarna, king of Ceylon.                           |
| c. 375.     | Chandragupta II, acc.  |
| c. 395.     | Conquest of western India.   |
| 405-11.     | Travels of Fa-hien in Gupta empire.                                |
| 413.        | Kumāragupta I, acc.  |
| 448.        | Establishment of Huns in Oxus basin, and epoch of Hun era.         |
| 455.        | Skandagupta, acc. ; first Hun war.                                 |
| 470.        | Aryabhata, astronomer, born.                                       |
| c. 480-90.  | Partial break up of Gupta empire.                                  |
| 484.        | Firōz, king of Persia, killed by the Huns.                         |
| c. 400-770. | Dynasty of Valabhi.  |
| 499.        | Latest date of Budhagupta.   |
| 500.        | Accession of Toramāna in Mālwā (coins dated 52, scil. of Hun era). |

- A. D.  
 502. Accession of Mihiragula in Malwā.  
 505. Varāhamihira, astronomer, born.  
 c. 528. Defeat of Mihiragula, the Hun, by Indian powers.  
 542. Death of Mihiragula.  
 578. Brahmagupta, astronomer, born.  
 606. Harsha-vardhana, acc.; epoch of Harsha era.  
 606-12. Conquest of northern India by Harsha.  
 c. 620. Defeat of Harsha by Pulakesin II, Chalukya.  
 622. Flight of Muhammad to Medina; epoch of Hijri era.  
 629-45. Travels of Hsien Tsang (Yuan Chwang).  
 641. Arab conquest of Persia.  
 642. Defeat of Pulakesin II, Chalukya, by the Pallavas.  
 643. Harsha's assemblies at Kanauj and Prayāg.  
 645. Hsien Tsang arrived in China.  
 647. Death of Harsha; usurpation by minister  
 664. Death of Hsien Tsang.

## AUTHORITIES

Most of the necessary references will be found in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914). A few others are given in the notes to the text. Gupta art has been dealt with by the author in a well-illustrated paper entitled 'Indian Sculpture of the Gupta Period, A. D. 300-650', published in *Ostasiatische Zeitung*, April-June, 1914, just before the war. The same subject is treated in the *Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sarnāth* by DAYA RAM SAHNI and J. PH. VOGEL (Calcutta, 1914); and in the *Reports of the Archaeological Survey*.

The B. M. *Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasties, &c.*, by JOHN ALLAN (London, 1914) supersedes earlier publications to a large extent.

The most important publication on the Ajantā paintings since H. F. A. (1911) is the atlas of plates entitled *Ajantā Frescoes*, with introductory essays, issued by the India Society (Oxford University Press, 1915).

Two important essays appear in the *Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume*, Poona, 1917. D. R. Bhandarkar in 'Vikrama Era' rejects the hypothesis (*ante*, p. 151) that the era was founded by Vikramāditya. It seems to have been called *Kṛita* originally.

Prof. K. B. Pathak in 'New Light on Gupta Era and Mihirakula' justifies his title. He shows sound reasons for believing that the establishment of the Hūnas in the Oxus basin (*ante*, p. 163) took place in A. D. 488, the epoch of the Hun era; that Toramāna became king of Malwā in A. D. 500 (or late in A. D. 499); that he was succeeded in A. D. 502 by his son Mihiragula, who was born in A. D. 472 and died in A. D. 542, at the age of seventy. Those dates, which seem to be correct, have been inserted in the table. They rest mainly upon the evidence of Jain chronicles supported by certain inscriptions and coins. Pathak dates the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa (*ante*, p. 159) in the reign of Skandagupta. Mr. K. P. Jayaswal expounds other and less convincing theories in *Ind. Ant.*, 1917, pp. 145-53.



## BOOK III

### THE MEDIAEVAL HINDU KINGDOMS FROM THE DEATH OF HARSHA IN A.D. 647 TO THE MUHAMMADAN CONQUEST

#### CHAPTER 1

The transitional period ; Rājputs ; the Himalayan kingdoms and their relations with Tibet and China.

**A period of transition.** The disorder following upon Harsha's death, in which the attack on the Chinese envoy with the consequent subjugation of Tihūt by the Tibetans was an episode, lasted for a considerable number of years concerning which little is known. That time of confusion may be regarded conveniently for purposes of systematic study as forming the transition from Early to Mediaeval India, during which the hordes of foreign invaders were absorbed into the Hindu body politic and a new grouping of states was gradually evolved. The transitional period was marked by the development of the Rājput clans, never heard of in earlier times, which begin from the eighth century to play a conspicuous part in the history of northern and western India. They become so prominent that the centuries from the death of Harsha to the Muhammadan conquest of Hindostan, extending in round numbers from the middle of the seventh to the close of the twelfth century, might be called with propriety the Rājput Period. Nearly all the kingdoms were governed by families or clans which for ages past have been called collectively Rājputs. That term, the most generally used, is sometimes replaced by Chhattī, the vernacular equivalent of the Sanskrit Kshatriya, or by Thākur.

**Origin of the Rājputs.** The term Rājput, as applied to a social group, has no concern with race, meaning descent or relationship by blood. It merely denotes a tribe, clan, sept, or caste of warlike habits, the members of which claimed aristocratic rank, and were treated by the Brahmans as representing the Kshatriyas of the old books. The huge group of Rājput clan-castes includes people of the most diverse descent. Many of the clans are descended from the foreigners who entered India during the fifth and sixth centuries, while many others are descended from indigenous tribes now represented, so far as the majority of their members is concerned, either by semi-Hinduized peoples or by inferior castes.

Probably it would be safe to affirm that all the most distinguished clan-castes of Rājputāna or Rājasthān are descended mainly from foreigners, the 'Scythians' of Tod. The upper ranks of the invad-

ing hordes of Hūnas, Gurjaras, Maitrakas, and the rest became Rājput clans, while the lower developed into Hindu castes of less honourable social status, such as Gūjars, Āhīrs, Jāts, and others.

Such clan-castes of foreign descent are the proud and chivalrous Sisōdias or Guhilōts of Mewār, the Parihārs (Pratihāras), the Chauhāns (Chāhumānas), the Pawārs (Pramāras), and the Solankis, otherwise called Chaulukyās or Chalukyās.<sup>1</sup>

The Rāshtrakūtas of the Deccan; the Rāthors of Rājputāna, whose name is only a vernacular form of the same designation; the Chandēls and the Bundēlas of Bundēlkhand, are examples of ennobled indigenous peoples. The Chandēls evidently originated from among the Gonds, who again were closely associated with the Bhārs. It is impossible to pursue further the subject, which admits of endless illustration.

**Brahmans and Kshatriyas.** In ancient times the line of demarcation between the Brahman and the Kshatriyas, that is to say, between the learned and the warrior groups of castes, was not sharply defined. It was often crossed, sometimes by change of occupation, and at other times by intermarriage. Ordinarily, the position of the leading Brahman at court was that of minister, but sometimes the Brahman preferred to rule directly, and himself seized the throne. Thus in early times the Sunga and Kāva royal families were Brahman. Similar cases of Brahman dynasties occur later. In the seventh century Hiuen Tsang noted the existence of several Brahman Rājās, as at Ujjain and in Jijhoti or Bundēlkhand. Usurpations by Brahman ministers also continued to happen. When a Brahman succeeded in founding a dynasty, and so definitely taking up Kshatriya work, his descendants were recognized as Kshatriyas, and allowed to intermarry freely with established Kshatriya families. It must be remembered that the Brahman themselves are of very diverse origin, and that many of them, as for instance the Nāgar Brahman, are descended from the learned or priestly class of the foreign hordes. The Maga Brahman were originally Iranian Magi. During the transitional stage, while a Brahman family was passing into the Kshatriya group of castes, it was often known by the composite designation of Brahma-kshatri. Several cases of the application of that term to royal families are recorded, the most prominent being those of the Sisōdias of Mewār and the Sēnas of Bengal.

**Rājput not a race.** The Rājput, as already stated, are not to be regarded as a people originally of one race, bound together by ties of blood descent from a common ancestor. Even within

<sup>1</sup> Pandit Mohanlāl Vishnulāl Pandia admits that Bāpa, the Guhilōt ancestor, was brought up as a concealed or reputed Brahman (*J. & Proc. A. S. B.*, 1912, pp. 62-69), and has not succeeded in refuting the reasoning of D. R. Bhandarkar concerning the origin of the Rānās of Mewār. If the frank statement of facts as revealed by modern research should give offence in any quarter that result is to be regretted. But, as Asoka observed long ago, 'truth must be spoken'.

the limits of Rājputāna the clans were originally descended from many distinct racial stocks. Such common features as they presented depended on the similarity of their warlike occupations and social habits. Now, of course, the operation of complicated caste rules concerning intermarriage during many centuries has produced an extensive network of blood-relationship between the clans, which have become castes.

Those condensed observations may help the student to understand in some measure why the Rājput clans begin to play so prominent a part in Indian history from the eighth century. The Hun invasions and their consequences, as observed in the chapter preceding, broke the chain of historical tradition. Living clan traditions rarely, if ever, go back beyond the eighth century, and few go back as far. The existing clan-castes only began to be formed in the sixth century. The Brahmins found their advantage in treating the new aristocracy, whatever its racial origin, as representing the ancient Kshatriya class of the scriptures, and the novel term Rāja-putra or Rājput, meaning 'king's son', or member of a ruling family or clan, came into use as an equivalent of Kshatriya.

Before entering upon a summary review of outstanding features in the history of the leading Rājput kingdoms of the plains, we must bestow a passing glance on the Himalayan States—Nepāl, Kashmīr, and Assam—and on their relations with Tibet and China.

**China and the Indian border.** The short-lived Hun empire was broken up by the Western Turks, who in their turn succumbed to the Chinese. For a few years, from 661 to 685, China enjoyed unparalleled prestige. Kāfiristān (Kapisa or Ki-pin) was a province of the empire, and the ambassadors in attendance at the imperial court included envoys from the Suwāt valley and from all the countries extending from Persia to Korea. Such glory did not last long. In 670 the Tibetans occupied Kashgaria, and a little later the Turks regained power. In the first half of the eighth century an ambitious emperor, Hiuen-tsung, succeeded in once more establishing Chinese rule over the western countries. Even kings of Kashmīr then received investiture from China. The advance of the Arabs in the middle of the eighth century put an end to Chinese claims to sovereignty over the mountains of Kashmīr, and since that time no state of the Indian borderland, except Nepāl, has had political relations with China.

**Tibet; Srong-tsan Gampo.** In the seventh and eighth centuries Tibet was a powerful state, in close touch with India as well as with China. The routes from China through Lhāsa and Nepāl into India now closed were then open and frequently used by pilgrims and other travellers. Srong-tsan Gampo, the most renowned of Tibetan kings, whose great reign is placed by the best authorities between A. D. 629 and 650, annexed Nepāl, defeated the usurper who had dared to occupy the throne vacated by Harsha, occupied Tichūt, and strengthened his position by marrying a Chinese princess as well as a Nepalese one. Acting under the

influence of his Buddhist consorts he introduced their religion into his kingdom, and gave his people the means of acquiring knowledge by importing from India the alphabet now used in Tibet. He founded Lhāsa, for which, according to tradition, he prepared the site by filling up a lake with stones.

In the first half of the eleventh century Atisa and other eminent monks from the seats of learning in Magadha came to Tibet on the invitation of the reigning king and effected extensive reforms or changes in the Buddhist church, which became the foundation of modern Lamaism.

'The object of all these reformations was not, as is often supposed, to go back to the early Buddhism as it was preached by Gautama, but to build up a church which represented the doctrines of the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism in a pure form. The doctrines of Nāgārjuna were propounded by all the great teachers of Tibet. But the Kāla-chakra philosophy with its monothestic tendencies was also favoured by them.'<sup>1</sup>

**Nepāl.** The kingdom of Nepāl as at present constituted is an extensive territory lying along the northern frontier of British India for about five hundred miles from Kumaon on the west to Sikkim on the east. The Nepāl of ancient Indian history means the restricted valley about twenty miles long and fifteen broad, in which the capital, Kāthmandu, and other towns are situated. Some of the adjoining country may have been included at times in the kingdom, but the bulk of the territory now comprised in the Nepāl state, whether in the hills or the strip of plain at their base, used to be occupied by independent tribes and principalities.

The valley certainly formed part of Asoka's empire, but the Kushāns do not seem to have meddled with it. In the fourth century A. C. Nepāl acknowledged in some degree the sovereignty of Samudragupta. In the seventh century the influence of Tibet was paramount, and after Harsha's death the country became actually subject to Tibet for half a century.<sup>2</sup> The theory that



Gurkha Coin.

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet* (Calcutta, 1914), p. 52. For the Kāla-chakra and other late corrupt forms of Buddhism see the excellent little book by Nagendra Nath Vasu and M. M. H. P. Sastri, entitled *Modern Buddhism and its Followers in Orissa* (Calcutta, 1911).

<sup>2</sup> In A. D. 703 both Nepāl and India [scil. Tihūt] threw off the Tibetan sovereignty. The king of Tibet was killed while attempting to reassert his authority (Parker, 'China, Nepal, &c.' in *J. Manchester Oriental Soc.*, 1911, pp. 129-52). That date, recorded in the histories of the T'ang dynasty, was not known to earlier European writers.

Harsha conquered Nepāl and introduced his era seems to be erroneous. The Gūrkhās who now rule Nepāl conquered the country in 1768. The foreign policy of the state is controlled by the government of India, although China from time to time has asserted claims to tribute. The long and blood-stained story of the mediæval dynasties is not of general interest, and may be left to students specially concerned with the local history.

Modern students of Nepalese affairs have been chiefly interested in the silent conflict of religions which has gone on for centuries and still may be watched in progress. A corrupt form of Buddhism, which allows even the strange institution of married monks, may be seen slowly decaying and yielding to the constant pressure of Brahmanical Hinduism, which is the religion of the government. The Nepalese libraries contain a rich store of Buddhist manuscripts, first made known by the labours of Brian Hodgson between 1820 and 1858, which have supplied much material for the study of the various forms of Buddhist religion and philosophy.

The general current of Indian history has not been affected by the transactions in Nepāl, which usually has remained isolated. The existing government discourages foreign visitors, and guards the passes so strictly that very little is known about the greater part of the area of the state.

**Art.** The art of Nepāl is closely related to that of Tibet. The craftsmen of both countries excel in metal-work, and the Tibetan artists have been eminently successful in producing realistic portrait statuettes of Buddhist saints and similar images of deities belonging to the populous pantheon of later Buddhism. Some of the Tibetan painting has considerable merit. The architecture of Nepāl in modern times is usually copied from Chinese models.

**Kashmīr.** The history of Hindu Kashmīr, from the seventh century after Christ, when the trustworthy annals begin, is recorded in ample detail in the metrical chronicle called the *Rajataranginī*, written in the twelfth century by a learned Brahman named Kalhana or Kalyāna, which has been admirably edited and translated by Sir M. A. Stein. The story, although of much interest in itself, has little concern with the general history of India; the reason being that the mountain barriers which enclose the vale of Kashmīr have usually sufficed to protect the country against foreign invasion and to preserve its isolated independence. Nevertheless, both the Mauryas and the Kushāns exercised effective authority over the valley. The Guptas did not concern themselves with it, and Harsha, while in a position to bring pressure to bear upon the Rājā, did not attempt to annex the country.

The narrative of the doings of the mediæval Hindu rulers teems with horrors. Harsha, a half-insane tyrant who reigned in the latter part of the eleventh century, has been justly described as the 'Nero of Kashmīr'. Few regions in the world can have had worse luck than Kashmīr in the matter of government, a fate due partly to the cowardly character of the population, which invited oppression. The avowed policy of the Hindu rulers

throughout the ages was to fleece the peasantry to the utmost and to leave them at best a bare subsistence. The majority of the people was forced to accept Islām in the fourteenth century, and dynasties of Muhammadan Sultans ruled until Akbar annexed the kingdom in 1587 with little difficulty. The lot of the common

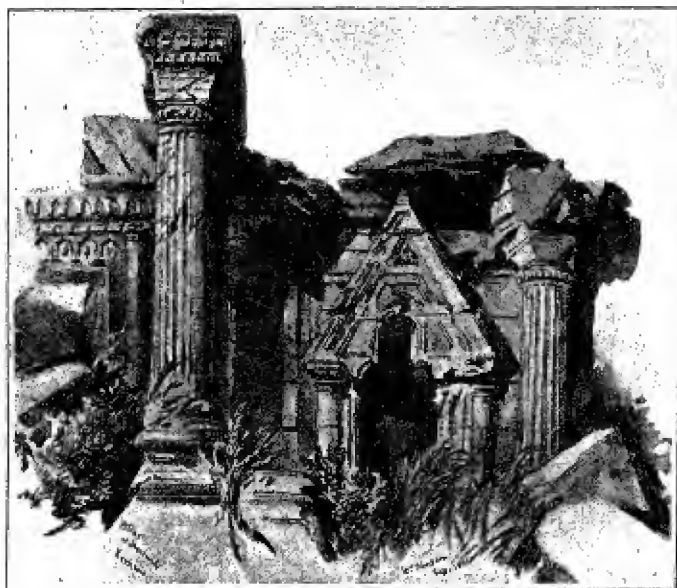


TIBETAN BRONZE.

people continued to be hard, whether the government was in the hands of Hindus or Musalmans. In modern times the Kashmīris were oppressed successively by the Afghans and the Sikhs, and never enjoyed the advantages of decently good administration until late in the nineteenth century.

But, although Kashmīr has ordinarily occupied a position politi-

cally isolated from India, the influence of the country on the religion and civilization of its neighbours has been considerable. The valley has been the abode of Sanskrit learning at least from the time of Asoka, and has played an important part as being the intermediate stage through which Indian civilization and art reached Khotan and the adjoining territories of Chinese Turkistan, and so passed into the Far East. The valley includes many sacred sites both Buddhist and Brahmanical. Jainism does not seem to have entered it. An interesting local style of architecture was



MARTAND TEMPLE.

developed in the eighth and ninth centuries. The Mārtand temple dedicated to the Sun-god in the reign of Lalitāditya (A.D. 724-60) is the best-known example, but many others exist.

**Assam.** Assam, roughly equivalent to the ancient Kāmarūpa, resembled Kashmīr in being protected by natural fortifications, and thus enabled, as a rule, to preserve its independence. The country does not seem to have been included in either the Maurya or the Kushān empire, but in the fourth century, its ruler, who belonged to an ancient Hindu dynasty, acknowledged in some degree the overlordship of Samudragupta. Buddhism never succeeded in establishing itself. Nevertheless, the ruling king in the seventh century insisted on receiving a visit from Hiuen

Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, who was hospitably entertained. The king, although not directly subject to Harsha, was constrained to obey his imperious commands and to attend humbly in his train when summoned. Certain Muhammadan leaders who invaded the country on several occasions between 1205 and 1662 always met with disaster more or less complete. The Muslim historian who describes the latest venture, that made by Aurangzēb's general Mir Jumla in the seventeenth century, expresses the horror with which the country and people were regarded by outsiders in striking phrases which deserve quotation.

'Assam', he observes, 'is a wild and dreadful country abounding in danger. . . . Its roads are frightful like the path leading to the nook of Death;

Fatal to life is its expanse like the unpeopled city of Destruction. . . .

The air and water of the hills are like the destructive Simoom and deadly poison to natives and strangers alike.'

The inhabitants 'resemble men in nothing beyond this, that they walk



Ahōm Coins.

erect on two feet'. They were reputed to be expert magicians. 'In short, every army that entered the limits of this country made its exit from the realm of Life; every caravan that set foot on this land deposited its baggage of residence in the halting-place of Death.'

Early in the thirteenth century Assam was invaded by the Ahōms, a Shan tribe from Upper Burma, who gradually acquired the sovereignty of the country, which they retained until it was occupied by the Burmese in 1816 and by the British in 1825. The Ahōms brought with them a tribal religion of their own, which they abandoned in favour of Hinduism about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Their language, too, is almost, if not completely, extinct. The Ahōms have become merged in the Hindu population, and speak Assamese, an Aryan language akin to Sanskrit and Bengali. When in power they had an efficient, although severe or even cruel, system of administration. They produced a considerable historical literature, and carried the art of carving wood to a high degree of excellence. The Muslim writer quoted expresses unbounded admiration of the decorations of the palace at Garhgāon. No trace of them remains.

<sup>1</sup> Talish, as transl. by Prof. Jadunath Sarkar in *J. B. & O. Res. Soc.*, vol. i, pp. 170-95.



Assam is a province of much interest to the student of Indian religion as being the meeting ground of Mongolian and Indian ideas. The contact has resulted in the evolution of a peculiar Tantric form of Hinduism, which offers special honour to female forms of the deity called Saktis. The temple of Kāmākhyā near Gauhati is recognized as one of the most important shrines of the cult. All the processes by means of which the members of rude animistic tribes become fanatical Hindus, and strange tribal gods are converted into respectable Brahmanical deities, may be illustrated in Assam.

## CHRONOLOGY

### (MISCELLANEOUS DATES)

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| A. D.      |  |
| 629.       | Srong-tsan Gampo, king of Tibet, acc.                        |
| 639.       | Srong-tsan Gampo founded Lhasa.                              |
| 641.       | Srong-tsan Gampo married Chinese and Nepalese princesses.    |
| 643.       | Hsien Tsung visited Kāmarūpa.                                |
| 647.       | Death of Harsha of Kanauj.                                   |
| 661-5.     | Chinese supremacy over Kapisa.                               |
| 670.       | Tibetans wrested Kashgaria or Chinese Turkistan from China.  |
| 703.       | Nepāl and Tihāt became independent of Tibet.                 |
| 713.       | Hsien-tsung, Chinese emperor, acc.                           |
| 720, 733.  | Kings of Kashmir received investiture from China.            |
| 751.       | Chinese defeated by the Arabs.                               |
| 1038.      | Mission of Atisa to Tibet (Waddell, <i>Lhasa</i> ?, p. 320). |
| 1089-1111. | Harsha, king of Kashmir.                                     |
| 1339.      | Muhammadan dynasty established in Kashmir.                   |
| 1587.      | Annexation of Kashmir by Akbar.                              |
| 1768.      | Gurkha conquest of Nepāl.                                    |

## AUTHORITIES

The authorities are indicated sufficiently in the foot-notes and in *E. H. I.*<sup>3</sup> (1914). The learned and beautiful book entitled *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, by ALICE GERTY and J. DENIKER (Clarendon Press, 1914), is a treasury of Tibetan art and mythology. See Laufer, in *J. A. O. S.*, vol. 38 (1918), pp. 31-46.

## CHAPTER 2

The northern and western kingdoms of the plains.

**Countless kingdoms.** During the five and a half centuries intervening between the death of Harsha and the Muhammadan conquest, in which no permanent foreign occupation was effected, except in the Panjāb, the greater part of India was indifferent to the Muhammadan power and knew nothing about it. The countless Hindu states, which took shape from time to time, varying continually in number, extent, and in their relations one with the other, seldom were at peace. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that their rulers and people thought of nothing else than war and rapine. Royal courts of no small magnificence were maintained, and the arts of peace were cultivated with success.

Stately works of architecture, enriched lavishly with sculptures often of high merit, were erected in almost every kingdom; and learned men, writing for the most part in the Sanskrit language, enjoyed liberal and intelligent patronage from princes who not unfrequently wielded the pen as well as the sword. Hindī, Bengālī, Gujarātī, and the other languages now spoken gradually attained the dignity of recognized existence, and the foundations of vernacular literatures were laid.

In a general history it is impossible to narrate in detail the stories of the several states, which are recorded in many cases with so much fullness that they would suffice to fill several volumes each as large as this work.

The effects of the great foreign invasions in the fifth and sixth centuries lasted for hundreds of years. The Gurjaras, with their kinsmen and allies bearing other names, had been converted, as has been shown, into ruling Rājput clans, and had acquired a dominant position in Rājputāna, which served as the basis of more extended dominion. In the ninth and tenth centuries the Gurjara-Pratihāras (Parihārs) became the leading power in north-western India. Bengal came under the sway of the Pālas, apparently an indigenous dynasty, for more than four centuries; while Mālwa, Gujarāt, and several other kingdoms obtained a large share of wealth and power.

**The course of history.** The history of northern India ordinarily pursued its own course, regardless of the events happening in the peninsular kingdoms. But occasionally the rulers of the Deccan made inroads into the rich plains of Āryāvarta or Hindostan, which resulted in the temporary extension of their power to the banks of the Ganges. No northern prince attempted to conquer the Deccan. The Tamil realms of the Far South formed a world of their own, its isolation being complete, save for frequent wars with the kings of the Deccan and Ceylon and for extensive foreign trade.

The ancient states of the Pāndyas, Cholas, and Cheras were overshadowed for a long time, especially in the seventh century, by the Pallava dynasty of uncertain origin, which had its capital at Kāñchi (Conjeeveram). In the eleventh century the Chola kingdom became paramount in the south, and probably was the most powerful state in India.

Changes so extensive, disconnected, and incessant as those indicated cannot be described in a single continuous narrative arranged in strict chronological order. The political revolutions were accompanied by silent local modifications in religion, manners, and art equally incapable of comprehensive narration.

The never-ending dynastic wars and revolutions did not bring about any development of political institutions. No republics were formed, no free towns were established. All the states continued to be governed in the old-fashioned way by despotic Rājās, each of whom could do what he pleased, so long as his power lasted, unless he suffered his will to be controlled by Brahman or other religious guides.

**Lack of unity.** It will be convenient to deal in this chapter only with certain outstanding features in the history of some of the more prominent northern and western kingdoms of the plains. The fortune of the peninsular states will similarly form the subject of the chapter following; the few points of contact between the two being duly noted.

The lack of unity in the subject-matter involves the same defect in its treatment by the historian. The facts which make India one in a certain sense, as explained in the Introduction to this work, are not capable by themselves of securing the political unity of all the Indian diverse races and creeds under one government. The confused picture drawn in outline in these chapters is a faithful representation of the normal condition of India when left to her own devices. Even now, in the twentieth century, she would relapse quickly into that condition, if the firm, although mild control exercised by the paramount power should be withdrawn.

**Gurjara-Pratihāra kingdom.** The Gurjaras, aided by the allied or kindred tribes bearing other names who entered India in the early years of the sixth century, established kingdoms or principalities in various places. The state among those so founded that was most closely associated with the general history of India was the Gurjara kingdom of southern Rājputāna, the capital of which was Bhīmāl or Bhilmāl to the north-west of Mount Ābū, the site of the fire-pit from which the Parihārs and several other Rājput clans originated according to the legend. When Hiuen Tsang visited that Gurjara kingdom in the first half of the seventh century the king, although undoubtedly of foreign descent, was already recognized as a Kshatriya.

About A. D. 725 a new local dynasty was founded by a chief named Nāgabhata, who belonged to the Parihār (Pratihāra) section or sept of the Gurjaras. Nearly a century later, in or about A. D. 816, his descendant, another Nāgabhata, invaded the Gangetic region, captured Kanauj, deposed the reigning king, and presumably transferred the seat of his own government from Bhilmāl to the imperial city of Harsha, where his descendants certainly ruled for many generations. The Parihārs remained in possession for two centuries until 1018-19 when Sultān Mahmūd of Ghazni occupied Kanauj and forced the Rājā to retire to Bāri.

**Kanauj.** Kanauj must have suffered much during the long-continued troubles which ensued on the decease of Harsha. Nothing definite is known about it until 731 when its king, Yasovarman by name, sent an embassy to China, probably to invoke the assistance of the emperor against the Rājā's powerful enemies. No help came. In or about 740 Yasovarman was defeated and slain by Lalitāditya, the most renowned of the kings of Kashmīr, the builder of the Mārtand temple. Yasovarman's successor similarly was overthrown by Lalitāditya's son. Again, about 810, Dharmapāla, king of Bengal, deposed the reigning king of Kanauj, replacing him by a nominee of his own. That nominee in his turn was expelled, as related above, by Nāgabhata Parihār

of Bhīnmāl. Thus, within a space of about seventy-six years (c. A. D. 740-816), four kings of Kanauj were violently deposed by hostile powers. The fact illustrates vividly the disturbed condition of northern India in that age.

**The Gurjara empire of Bhoja.** King Mihira Parihār of Kanauj, commonly known by his cognomen of Bhoja, reigned with great power and might for half a century (c. A. D. 840-90). His successors being known to have held both Saurāshtra and Oudh, those countries may be assumed to have formed part of Bhoja's dominions,



A TIBETAN BRONZE; KUVERA AND SAKTI.

which were extensive enough to be described as an empire without exaggeration. Its limits may be defined as, on the north, the foot of the mountains; on the north-west, the Sutlaj; on the west, the Hakra, or 'lost river', forming the boundary of Sind, and then the Mīhrān to the Arabian Sea; on the south, the Jūmna, forming the frontier of Jejāka-bhukti; on the south-west, the lower course of the Narbadā; and on the east, the frontier of the Pāla kingdom of Magadha. His son, Mahendra-pāla (c. A. D. 890-908), seems to have retained possession of all the dominions of his father. An inscription of his which mentions the province and district of Srāvastī suggests that that famous city was still inhabited in the

tenth century. Magadha or South Bihār seems to have been tributary for a short time.

Hardly anything is known about the internal condition of the transitory Gurjara or Parihār empire of Kanauj. An Arab traveller tells us that in the middle of the ninth century the king, namely Bhoja, commanded a powerful army, including the best cavalry in India and a large force of camels. The territories in Rājputāna have always been famous for their breed of camels, which is still maintained. The Mahārājā of Bikanēr's camel-corps has played an honourable part in the Great War. The extreme mobility of Bhoja's cavalry and camelry must have given him an immense advantage over the less active armies of the ordinary Hindu state. The king was extremely rich, and 'no country in India was more safe from robbers', a brief remark which implies the existence of efficient internal administration.

Bhoja was a Hindu specially devoted to the worship of Vishnu in the boar incarnation and of the goddess Bhagavatī or Lakshmi.



Coin of Ādi Varāha (Bhoja).

He placed on his coins, which are very common, the words *Ādi Varāha*, meaning 'primateval boar' or Vishnu. The coins, like the other issues of the White Hun and Gurjara princes, are degenerate imitations of Sassanian pieces, with reminiscences of the Greek drachma, the name of which survived in the

word *dramma* applied to the Gurjara coins. The foreign invaders of India in those times never took the trouble to devise coin types of their own and were content to use barbarous and degraded derivatives of the Persian coinage.

**Rājasekhara.** Mahendrapāla, the son and successor of Bhoja, was the pupil of Rājasekhara, a poet from the Deccan who attended his court and was the author of four extant plays. One of those, entitled *Karpūra-manjari* from the name of the heroine, is a curious and interesting work, written wholly in Prākṛit. Professor Lanman has published a clever English translation of it. The dramatist also composed a work on the art of poetry, which has been edited in the Gaikwār's *Oriental Series*.

Before we proceed to describe the decline and fall of the Gurjara empire and the capture of Kanauj by Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazni in 1018-19, it will be convenient to give a brief account of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal and the Chandēl rulers of Jijhoti or Bundēl-khand, the two leading kingdoms of northern India which were contemporary with the Gurjara kingdom or empire of Kanauj; adding a slight notice of other states.

**Bengal; Ādisūra.** The history of Bengal and Bihār after the decease of Harsha is obscure. The rulers of part of Magadha or

South Bihār in the latter part of the seventh century were members of the imperial Gupta family, who had as neighbours in another section of the province Rājās belonging to a clan called Maukharī.

Bengal tradition has much to say about a king named Ādisūra, who ruled at Gaur or Lakṣmanāvati, and sought to revive the Brahmanical religion which had suffered from Buddhist predominance. He is believed to have imported five Brahmans from Kanauj, who taught orthodox Hinduism and became the ancestors of the Rādhiya and Vārendra Brahmans. His date may be placed in or after A. D. 700.

The Pāla dynasty; Dharmapāla. Then Bengal suffered from prolonged anarchy which became so intolerable that the people (c. A. D. 750) elected as their king one Gopāla, of the 'race of the sea', in order to introduce settled government. We do not know the details of the events thus indicated. Gopāla's son, Dharmapāla, who enjoyed an unusually long reign, was the real founder of the greatness of his dynasty, which is conveniently known as that of the 'Pāla Kings' of Bengal, because the names of the sovereigns ended in the word *-pāla*. Dharmapāla succeeded in carrying his arms far beyond the limits of Bengal and Bihār. He made himself master of most of northern India, and, as already mentioned, was strong enough to depose one Rājā of Kanauj and substitute another in his place. He is said to have effected the revolution with the assent of nine northern kings, whose designations indicate that the influence of the Bengal monarch extended even to Gandhāra on the north-western frontier. Those events must have happened about or soon after A. D. 810.



SCULPTURE, PĀLA PERIOD,

Dharmapāla, like all the members of his house, was a zealous Buddhist. He founded the famous monastery and college of Vikramasīla, which probably stood at Pattharghāta in the Bhāgalpur District. The Buddhism of the Pālas was very different from the religion or philosophy taught by Gautama, and was a corrupt form of Mahāyāna doctrine.

Devapāla. Dharmapāla's son Devapāla, who is reckoned by Bengal tradition to have been the most powerful of the Pālas,

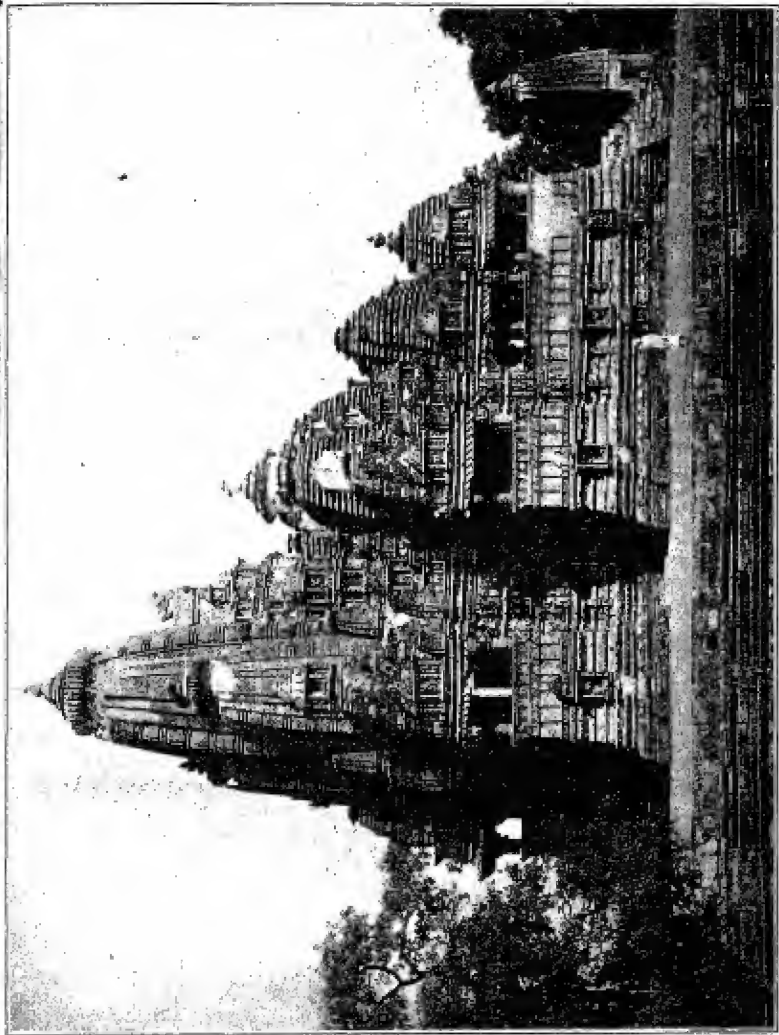
also enjoyed a long reign. His rule and that of his father together covered something like a hundred years, and may be taken as having extended through almost the whole of the ninth century. Devapāla's general, Lāusena or Lavasena, is said to have annexed both Assam and Kalinga. No buildings of Pāla age seem to have survived, but the remembrance of the kings is preserved by many great tanks or artificial lakes excavated under their orders, especially in the Dinājpur District. Sculpture in both stone and metal was practised with remarkable success. The names of two eminent artists, Dhīmān and Bitpālo or Vītapāla, are recorded, and it is possible that some of the numerous extant works may be attributed rightly to them.

**Mahipāla, &c.; the Sēnas.** The popular memory has attached itself to Mahipāla, the ninth king of the dynasty (c. A.D. 978-1030), more than to any other. He reigned for about half a century and underwent the strange experience of being attacked about A.D. 1023 by Rājendra Chola, the Tamil king of the Far South, who prided himself on having advanced as far as the bank of the Ganges. The mission of Atisa to Tibet, as already mentioned, was dispatched in A.D. 1038, in the reign of Nayapāla, the successor of Mahipāla.

The dynasty, which underwent various ups and downs of fortune, lasted until the Muhammadan conquest of Bihār in 1199. Part of Bengal came under the sway of a new dynasty, that of the Senas, early in the eleventh century. Vallāla-sena or Ballāl Sen, who seems to have reigned from about 1158 to 1170, is credited by Bengal tradition with having reorganized the caste system, and introduced the practice of 'Kulinism' among Brahmans, Baidyas, and Kāyasths. The Senas originally were Brahmans from the Deccan, and their rise seems to have been a result of the Chola invasion in 1023. The details of their chronology and history are obscure.

Among the more important Indian ruling families the Pālas and the Andhras alone attained the distinction of enduring each for four and a half centuries.

**Chandēl dynasty.** But the Chandēl dynasty of Jijhotī or Bundēlkhand, although it never attained a position as exalted as that of the greatest Andhra and Pāla kings, had a still longer history, and played a considerable part on the Indian political stage for about three centuries. The early Chandēl Rājās appear to have been petty Gond chiefs in the territory now called the Chhatarpur State in the Central India Agency. In the ninth century they overthrew neighbouring Parihār (Pratihāra) chieftains of foreign origin, who must have been connected with the Bhīmāl-Kanauj dynasty, and advanced their frontier towards the north in the region now called Bundēlkhand, until they approached the Jumna. The principal towns in the kingdom, which was called Jejāka-bhukti or Jijhotī, were Khajurāho in Chhatarpur, Mahoba in the Hamirpur District, and Kālanjar in the Bāndā District, U.P. The military power of the king-



TEMPLE, KHAJURAHOO.



dom depended largely on the possession of the strong fortress of Kālanjar.

The Chandēl Rājās, who probably had been tributary to Bhoja of Kanauj, became fully independent in the tenth century. King Dhanga, whose reign covered the second half of that century, was the most notable prince of his family. He joined the Hindu confederacy formed to resist Amīr Sabuktigīn, the earliest Muslim invader, and shared the disastrous defeat suffered by the allies on the Afghan frontier. Ganda, a later Rājā, took part in the opposition to Sultan Mahmūd, which will be noticed presently more particularly. In the second half of the eleventh century Rājā Kīrtivarman restored the glories of his house, defeated Karnadeva, the aggressive king of Chedi, the ancient Mahākosala, equivalent in large measure to the modern Central Provinces, and widely extended the frontiers of his dominions. Kīrtivarman is memorable in literary history as the patron of the curious allegorical play, entitled the *Prabodha chandrodaya*, or 'Rise of the Moon of Intellect', which was performed at his court about A.D. 1065, and gives in dramatic form a clever exposition of the Vedānta system of philosophy. The Rājā's memory is also preserved by the name of the Kīrat Sāgar, a lake situated among the hills near Mahoba.

The last Chandēl Rājā to enjoy the position of an independent king of importance was Paramardi or Parmāl, who was defeated by Prithviraj Chauhān in 1182, and by Kutbu-d dīn Ibak in 1203. After that date the Chandēl Rājās sank into obscurity, but long continued to reign as local princes in the jungles of Bundēlkhand. Durgāvatī, the noble Queen of Gondwāna, who so gallantly resisted the unprovoked aggression of Akbar's general, Asaf Khān, in 1564, was a Chandēl princess. She was married to a Gond Rājā, thus renewing the ancient relation between the tribesmen of the forest and their ennobled Rājput kinsmen of the plain. The dynasty even now has a representative in the Rājā of Gidhaur in the Monghyr (Mungir) District of Bihār, whose ancestor emigrated from Bundēlkhand in the thirteenth century.

**Chandēl architecture.** One of the beautiful lakes which Chandēl princes formed by damming up valleys among the low forest-clad hills of Bundēlkhand has been mentioned. Many others exist, on the banks of which I often pitched my tents in my youth. The embankments are gigantic structures faced with stone and sometimes crowned by magnificent temples of granite, or rather gneiss. A large group of such temples still standing at Khajurāho is familiar to all students of Indian architecture. Some of the best examples were erected by King Dhanga in the second half of the tenth century. The Jain religion had numerous adherents in the Chandēl dominions during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, although it is now nearly extinct in that region. Ancient Jain temples and dated images may still be seen in many villages. Buddhism had but a slight hold on the country, and Buddhist images, although not unknown, are rare.

**Rājā Bhoja of Dhār.** The Pawārs or Paramāras, one of the clans of foreign origin supposed to have been born from the fire-pit of Mount Ābū, founded a dynasty in Mālhwā, which took its share in the wars of the period and attained considerable distinction. The most renowned prince of the dynasty was Rājā Bhoja, who reigned for more than forty years, from about 1018 to 1060.<sup>1</sup> He was an accomplished scholar and a liberal patron of Sanskrit learning. His name in consequence has become proverbial as that of the ideal Hindu prince. The defeat of Bhoja in or about 1060 by the allied armies of Gujarāt and Chedi reduced the Rājā of Mālhwā to a position of little political importance. Dhār or Dhārā, now the head-quarters of a petty state, was the capital of Bhoja, who adorned the town with handsome edifices, of which some vestiges remain in spite of the long-continued Muslim occupation. The immense Bhojpur lake formed by damming the Betwa river and a smaller stream, and covering an area exceeding 250 square miles, was constructed by Rājā Bhoja. Early in the fifteenth century the dam was cut by Hoshang Shāh, Sultan of Mālhwā, with the result that a large area of valuable land was reclaimed for cultivation. The Indian Midland Railway now traverses the dry bed of the lake.

**Gujarāt.** A passing reference to the Solanki or Chaulukya dynasty of Gujarāt established by Mūlarāja in the tenth century must suffice, although stories about Mūlarāja occupy a prominent place in the semi-historical legends of the province. If tradition may be believed, Mūlarāja was a son of the king of Kanauj, apparently Mahīpāla, who probably had appointed his son to be viceroy in the west. Mūlarāja seems to have seized an opportunity to rebel and set up as an independent sovereign.

We now return to the north and resume the thread of the story of Kanauj with that of other northern kingdoms.

**Mahīpāla of Kanauj.** The Parihār empire began to break up in the reign of Mahīpāla (c. A. D. 910-40), who was a grandson of Bhoja. His power suffered a severe shock in A.D. 916 when Indra III, the Rāshtrakūta king of the Deccan, captured Kanauj. Although the southern monarch did not attempt to secure a permanent dominion on the banks of the Ganges, his successful raid necessarily weakened the authority of Mahīpāla, who could no longer hold the western provinces. The Chandēl king helped Mahīpāla to recover his capital. Some years later Gwālīor became independent, but the Kanauj kingdom still continued to be one of the leading states.

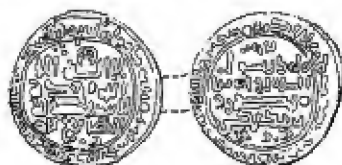
**Rājā Jaipāl of Bathindah.** The rule of the Parihārs had never extended across the Sutlaj, and the history of the Panjāb between the seventh and tenth centuries is extremely obscure. At some

<sup>1</sup> Care should be taken not to confound him with Bhoja or Mihira Parihār of Kanauj who reigned from about A. D. 840 to 890, and has been forgotten by Indian tradition. Names like Mahīpāla, Mahendrāpala, and many others occur in distinct dynastic lists, and it is easy to confound the bearers of the names.

time not recorded a powerful kingdom had been formed, which extended from the mountains beyond the Indus, eastwards as far as the Hakra or 'lost river', so that it comprised a large part of the Panjāb, as well as probably northern Sind. The capital was Bathindah (Bhatinda), the Tabarhind of Muhammadan histories, now in the Patiala State, and for many centuries an important fortress on the military road connecting Mūltān with India proper through Delhi. At that time Delhi, if in existence, was a place of little consideration. In the latter part of the tenth century the Rājā of Bathindah was Jaipāl, probably a Jat or Jāt.

**Freedom of the Hindu states.** Until almost the end of the tenth century the Indian Rājās were at liberty to do what they pleased, enjoying exemption from foreign invasion and freedom from the control of any paramount authority. Their position was gravely disturbed when an aggressive Muhammadan power, alien in religion, social customs, ideas, and methods of warfare, appeared on the scene and introduced an absolutely novel element into the interior politics of India, which had not been seriously affected

either by the Arab conquest of Sind at the beginning of the eighth century or by the later Muslim occupation of Kābul.



Coin of Sabuktigin.

**Amīr Sabuktigīn.** An ambitious Muhammadan chief named Sabuktigīn, Amīr of Ghaznī, effected a sudden change. In A.D. 986-7 (A.N. 376) he made his first raid into Indian territory, and

came into conflict with Rājā Jaipāl of Bathindah. Two years later the Hindu prince retaliated by an invasion of the Amīr's territory, but being defeated was compelled to sign a treaty binding him to pay a large indemnity and to surrender four forts to the west of the Indus besides many elephants. Jaipāl broke the treaty and was punished for his breach of faith by the devastation of his border-lands and the loss of the Lamghān or Jalālābād District. After a short interval, in or about A.D. 991, Jaipāl made a vigorous effort to ward off the growing Muslim menace by organizing a confederacy of Hindu kings, including among others Rājyapāla, the Parihār king of Kanauj, and Dhanga, the ruler of the distant Chandēl kingdom to the south of the Jumna. The allies were defeated disastrously somewhere in or near the Kurram (Kurmah) valley, and Peshāwar passed under Muhammadan rule.

**Sultan Mahmūd.** In A.D. 997 the crown of Ghaznī descended after a short interval to Sabuktigīn's son Mahmūd, who assumed the title of Sultan, the royal style preferred by the Muhammadan kings in India for several centuries. Mahmūd was a zealous Musalman of the ferocious type then prevalent, who felt it to be a duty as well as a pleasure to slay idolaters. He was also greedy of treasure and took good care to derive a handsome profit from his

holy wars. Historians are not clear concerning either the exact number or the dates of his raids. The computation of Sir Henry Elliot that Mahmūd made seventeen expeditions may be accepted. Whenever possible he made one each year. Hindu authorities never mention distinctly his proceedings, which are known only from the testimony of Muhammadan authors, who do not always agree.

It was the custom of the Sultan to quit his capital early in October and utilize the cold weather for his operations. Three months of steady marching brought him into the heart of the rich Gangetic provinces; and by the time he had slain his tens of thousands and collected millions of treasure he was ready at the beginning of the hot season to go home and enjoy himself. He carried off crowds of prisoners as slaves, including no doubt skilled masons and other artisans whom he employed to beautify his capital; as his successors did in later times. It would be tedious to relate in full the story of all his murderous expeditions. Their character will appear sufficiently from a brief notice of the more notable raids.

**Early raids.** In November 1001, not long after his accession, in the course of his second expedition, he inflicted a severe defeat near Peshāwar on Jaipāl, who was taken prisoner with his family. The captive, who was released on terms after a time, refused to survive his disgrace. He committed suicide by fire and was succeeded by his son Ānandpāl, who continued the struggle with the foreigners, but without success. He followed his father's example and organized a league of Hindu Rājās, including the rulers of Ujjain, Gwālior, Kanauj, Delhi, and Ajmēr, who took the field with a host which was larger than that opposed to Sabuktigīn, and was under the supreme command of Visala-deva, the Chauhān Rājā of Ajmēr. The hostile forces watched each other on the plain of Peshāwar for forty days, during which the Hindus received reinforcements from the powerful Khokhar tribe of the Panjāb, while the Sultan was compelled to form an entrenched camp. The camp was stormed by a rush in force of the new allies, who slew three or four thousand Musalmāns in a few minutes. Victory seemed to be within the grasp of the Hindus when it was snatched from their hands by one of those unlucky accidents which have so often determined the fate of Indian battles. The elephant carrying either Ānandpāl himself or his son Brahmanpāl, for accounts differ as usual, turned and fled. The Indians, on seeing this, broke in disorder. The Muhammadan cavalry pursued them for two days and nights, killing eight thousand and capturing enormous booty. Loosely organized confederacies of Hindu contingents each under its own independent chief almost always proved incapable of withstanding the attack of fierce foreign cavalry obeying one will.

**Kāngrā.** The decisive victory thus gained enabled the Sultan to attack with success the strong fortress of Kāngrā or Bhīmgar, with its temple rich in treasure accumulated by the devotion of generations of Hindus (A. D. 1009). Vast quantities of coined money

and gold and silver bullion were carried off. The treasure included

'a house of white silver, like to the houses of rich men, the length of which was thirty yards and the breadth fifteen. It could be taken to pieces and put together again. And there was a canopy, made of the fine linen of Rûm, forty yards long and twenty broad, supported on two golden and two silver poles, which had been cast in moulds'.

The Sultan returned to Ghaznî with his booty and astonished the ambassadors from foreign powers by the display of

'jewels and unbored pearls and rubies, shining like sparks, or like wine congealed with ice, and emeralds like fresh sprigs of myrtle, and diamonds in size and weight like pomegranates'.

The fortress was held by a Muslim garrison for thirty-five years, after which it was recovered by the Hindus. It did not pass finally under Muhammadan rule until 1620, when it was captured by an officer of Jahāngīr. The buildings were ruined to a great extent by the earthquake of 1905.

**Mathurā and Kanauj.** The expedition reckoned as the twelfth was directed specially against Kanauj, the imperial city of northern India, then under the rule of Rājyapāla Parihār. The Sultan, sweeping away all opposition, crossed the Jumna on December 2, 1018, and was preparing to attack Baran or Bulandshahr when the Rājā, by name Hardatt, tendered his submission and with ten thousand of his men accepted the religion of Islām.

Mathurā, the holy city of Krishna, was the next victim. 'In the middle of the city there was a temple larger and finer than the rest, which can neither be described nor painted.' The Sultan was of opinion that two hundred years would have been required to build it. The idols included 'five of red gold, each five yards high', with eyes formed of priceless jewels. 'The Sultan gave orders that all the temples should be burnt with naphtha and fire, and levelled with the ground.' Thus perished works of art which must have been among the noblest monuments of ancient India.

Rājyapāla, not daring to attempt the serious defence of his capital, fled across the Ganges. The seven forts which guarded Kanauj were all taken in one day, in January 1019, and the Sultan's troops were let loose to plunder and make captives. It was reported that the city contained nearly ten thousand temples, but it is not said distinctly that they were destroyed. The Sultan, after making an excursion into the Fatehpur District and to the borders of Jijhoti (Bundēlkhand), retired to Ghaznî with his prisoners and plunder.

**Collapse of Ganda Chandēl.** The cowardly flight of the Kanauj Rājā angered his fellow Rājās who, under the command of a Chandēl prince, combined against Rājyapāla, slew him, and replaced him by Trilochanapāla.

Mahmūd, who regarded the slain Rājā as his vassal, resolved to punish the chiefs who had dared to defy his might. He marched

again in the autumn of A. D. 1019, forced the passage of the Jumna, and entered the territory of Ganda Chandēl, who had assembled a host so vast that the Sultan was frightened. But Ganda, a faint-hearted creature, stole away in the night, and allowed the enemy to carry off to Ghaznī 580 elephants and much other booty. When Mahmūd came back again in 1021-2 Ganda once more refused to fight, and was content to buy off the invader.

**Somnāth.** The most celebrated and interesting of Mahmūd's expeditions was the sixteenth, undertaken with the object of sacking the temple of Somnāth or Prabhāsa Pattana on the coast of Surāshtra or Kāthiāwar, which was known to be stored with incalculable riches. The authorities differ concerning the chronology of the operations, probably because some of them ignore the fact that Mahmūd spent about a year in Gujarāt.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have quitted Ghaznī in December, A. D. 1023 (A. H. 414), with a force of 80,000 horsemen besides volunteers. He advanced by Multān and from Ajmēr through the Rājputāna desert to Anhilwāra or Pātan in Gujarāt. The march through a country lacking in both food and water required extensive commissariat arrangements and a considerable expenditure of time. The Sultan consequently did not appear before Somnāth until the middle of the eleventh month of A. H. 414, or about March, A. D. 1024, or, according to other authorities, 1025. A fiercely contested fight gave the invaders possession of the fortified temple and of an enormous mass of treasure. The number of the slain exceeded fifty thousand.

The object of worship was a huge stone *lingam* enshrined in the sanctum of a temple constructed mainly of timber. The principal hall had fifty-six columns of wood covered with lead.

The Sultan returned through Sind by a route more westerly than that he had used in coming. His army suffered severely from want of water. He arrived at Ghaznī about April 1026, loaded with plunder.

The Somnāth expedition was the last important military operation of Mahmūd. His final Indian expedition in A. D. 1027 was directed against the Jats in the neighbourhood of Multān. The remainder of his life was occupied by domestic troubles, and he died in April, A. D. 1030 (A. H. 421), at the age of sixty-two.

**Results of the raids.** The Panjāb, or a large part of it, was annexed to the Ghaznī Sultanate. That annexation constitutes the sole claim of Mahmūd to be counted as an Indian sovereign. While Muhammadan historians regard him as one of the glories of Islām, a less partial judgement finds in his proceedings little deserving of admiration. His ruling passion seems to have been avarice. He spent large sums in beautifying his capital and in endowing Muhammadan institutions in it. Like several other ferocious Asiatic conquerors he had a taste for Persian literature, and gained a reputation as a patron of poets and theologians. Firdausī, the author of the immense Persian epic, the *Shahnamā*,

<sup>1</sup> For the year's stay see Forbes, *Rāsmālā*, i, 79, and Elphinstone. The *J. G.* (1908), s. v. Somnāth, correctly dates the operations in 1024-6.

considering himself to have been treated with insufficient generosity, composed a bitter satire upon the Sultan which is extant. Such matters, which occupy a prominent place in the writings of Elphinstone and other authors, really have no relevance to the history of India and need not be noticed further. So far as India was concerned Mahmūd was simply a bandit operating on a large scale, who was too strong for the Hindu Rājās, and was in consequence able to inflict much irreparable damage. He did not attempt to effect any permanent conquest except in the Panjāb, and his raids had no lasting results in the interior beyond the destruction of life, property, and priceless monuments.

**Albērūnī.** The most distinguished ornament of Sultan Mahmūd's reign was the profound scholar commonly called Albērūnī,<sup>1</sup> who had little reason to feel gratitude to the raiding Sultan, although patronized intelligently by his son Mas'ūd. Albērūnī, who was born in A. D. 973 and died in A. D. 1048, was a native of the Khwārizm or Khiva territory, and was brought to Ghaznī either as a prisoner or as a hostage. When the Sultan succeeded in occupying the Panjāb, Albērūnī took up his residence for a time in the newly acquired province, and used the opportunity to make a thorough survey of Hindu philosophy and other branches of Indian science. He mastered the Sanskrit language, and was not too proud to read even the Purānas. He noted carefully and recorded accurately numerous observations on the history, character, manners, and customs of the Hindus, and was thus able to compose the wonderful book conveniently known as 'Albērūnī's India', which is unique in Muslim literature, except in so far as it was imitated without acknowledgement more than five centuries later by Abū-l-Fazl in the *Ain-i Akbarī*. The author, while fully alive to the defects of Hindu literary methods, was fascinated by the Indian philosophy, especially as expounded in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. He was consumed with a desire to discover truth for its own sake, and laboured conscientiously to that end with a noble disregard of ordinary Muhammadan prejudices. As his learned translator observes:

His book on India is 'like a magic island of quiet impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples'.

His special subjects were 'astronomy, mathematics, chronology, mathematical geography, physics, chemistry, and mineralogy', all treated with such consummate learning that few modern scholars are capable of translating his treatises, and the versions, when accomplished, are often beyond the comprehension of even well-educated readers. Albērūnī undoubtedly was one of the most gifted scientific men known to history. Some of his writings have been lost, and others remain in manuscript. The translation by Sachau of his *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, published in

<sup>1</sup> His full designation was Abū-Rihān (Ruhān) Muḥammad, son of Ahmad. He became familiarly known as Bā-Rihān, Ustād ('Master'), Al-Berūnī ('the foreigner'). The spellings Al-Bīrūnī and Al-Bērūnī are both legitimate.



1879, is a valuable work of reference, but very difficult to understand.

**The Gaharwārs of Kanauj.** The Parihār dynasty of Kanauj came to an end in some manner unknown prior to A.D. 1090 and was succeeded by Rājās belonging to the Gaharwār (Gahadavāla) clan, who were connected with the Chandēls and were of indigenous origin. Govindachandra, grandson of the founder of the new dynasty, enjoyed a long reign lasting for more than half a century (c. A.D. 1100 to 1160), and succeeded in restoring the glory of the Kanauj kingdom to a considerable extent. Numerous inscriptions of his reign are extant.



Coin of Govindachandra.

**Rājā Jaichand.** His grandson, renowned in popular legend as Rājā Jaichand (Jayachandra), was reputed by the Muhammadan writers to be the greatest king in India and was known to them as King of Benares, which seems to have been his principal residence. The incident of the abduction of his not unwilling daughter by the gallant Rāi Pithorā or Prithirāj Chauhān of Ajmēr is a famous theme of bardic lays.

When Jaichand essayed to stem the torrent of Muslim invasion in 1194, Muhammad of Ghōr (Shihābu-d dīn, or Muizzu-d dīn, the son of Sām) defeated the huge Hindu host with immense slaughter at Chandrāwar in the Etawah District near the Jumna. The Rājā was among the slain, and his capital, Benares, was plundered so thoroughly that 1,400 camels were needed to carry away the booty. That battle put an end to the independent kingdom of Kanauj, but local Rājās more or less subordinate to the ruling power of the day long continued to rule in the ancient city. The Gaharwār Rājās were succeeded by Chandēls. Innumerable migrations of Rājput clans caused by the early Muhammadan invasions are recorded in village traditions and rude metrical chronicles kept by court bards.

**The Chauhāns ; Prithirāj.** The Chauhān chiefs of Sāmbhar and Ajmēr in Rājputāna fill a large place in Hindu tradition and in the story of the Muhammadan conquest of Hindostan. One of them named Vighararāja (IV) may be mentioned as a noted patron of Sanskrit literature, who was credited with the composition of a drama, fragments of which are preserved on stone tablets at Ajmēr. His brother's son was Rāi Pithorā or Prithirāj, already mentioned, who carried off Jaichand's daughter about A.D. 1175, and defeated the Chandēls in 1182. He led the resistance to Muhammad of Ghōr ten years later, was defeated at the second battle of Tarāin, captured, and executed. His city of Ajmēr was sacked, and the inhabitants were either massacred or enslaved.

He is the most popular hero of northern India to this day, and his exploits are the subject of bards' songs and vernacular epics.



**The Chand Rāisā.** The most celebrated of such epics is the *Chand Rāisā* composed by Prithirāj's court poet Chand Bardāi. The poem, written in archaic Hindī, has been constantly enlarged by reciters, as no doubt the Homeric poems were, and is believed to comprise about 125,000 verses. But the original composition, of only 5,000 verses, is said to be still in existence and in the custody of the poet's descendant, who resides in the Jodhpur State, and still enjoys the grant of lands made to his illustrious ancestor. It is much to be desired that the precious original manuscript should be copied and printed. The supposed error in Chand Bardāi's dates does not exist. He used a special form of the Vikrama era, ninety or ninety-one years later than that usually current. Many other compositions of a similar character are to be found in Rājputāna.

**History of Delhi.** Delhi, meaning by that term the old town near the Kutb Mīnār, was founded, according to an authority cited by Raverty, in A.D. 933-4.<sup>1</sup> It was held in the eleventh century by Rājās of the Tomara clan, who erected numerous temples, which were destroyed by the Muhammadans, who used the materials for their buildings. In the twelfth century the city was included in the dominions of Prithirāj. The wonderful iron pillar, originally erected somewhere else, perhaps at Mathurā in the fourth century, seems to have been moved and set up in its present position by the Tomara chief in the middle of the eleventh century. It is a mass of wrought iron nearly 24 feet in length and estimated to weigh more than six tons. The metal is perfectly welded and its manipulation is a triumph of skill in the handling of a refractory material. It is not the only proof that the ancient Indians possessed exceptional mastery over difficult problems of working in iron and other metals.

The current belief that Delhi is a city of immemorial antiquity rests upon the tradition that the existing village of Indarpat marks the site of part of the Indraprastha of the *Mahābhārata* at a very remote age. The tradition may be correct, but there is not a vestige of any prehistoric town now traceable. The first of the many historical cities, known collectively as Delhi, was founded near the close of the tenth century after Christ, and did not attain importance until the time of Ananga Pāla Tomara in the middle of the eleventh century. Most people probably have a vague impression that Delhi always was the capital of India. If they have, their belief is erroneous. Delhi never figured largely in Hindu history. It was ordinarily the head-quarters of the Sultans of Hindostan from 1206 to 1526, but did not become the established Mogul capital until Shāhjahān moved his court from Agra in 1648. It continued to be the usual residence of his successors until 1858 when their dynasty was extinguished. Since 1912 a new Delhi has been declared the official capital of the Government of India. The decision then taken is open to criticism from many points of view.

<sup>1</sup> But other dates also are recorded.

- A. D.
- 647. Death of Harsha.
  - c. 700. Ādisūra in Bengal.
  - 712. Arab conquest of Sind.
  - 731. Embassy to China of Yasovarman, king of Kanauj.
  - c. 740. Yasovarman defeated by Lalitāditya, king of Kashmir (A. D. 733-69).
  - c. 750. Pāla dynasty of Bengal founded by Gopāla.
  - c. 810. Dharmapāla, king of Bengal, deposed a king of Kanauj and appointed another.
  - c. 816. Parihār capital transferred from Bhinmāl to Kanauj.
  - c. 840-90. Bhoja, or Mihira, the powerful Parihār king of Kanauj.
  - 933-4. Probable date of foundation of Delhi.
  - c. 942-97. Mūlarāja, king of Gujarāt.
  - c. 950-99. Dhanga, the most powerful of the Chandēl kings.
  - 973-1043. Albērūnī, scientific author.
  - 997. Sultan Mahmūd of Ghaznī, acc.
  - 1001. Sultan Mahmūd defeated Jalpāl.
  - 1008-19. The Sultan defeated Anandpāl and took Kāngrā.
  - 1018-19. The Sultan took Kanauj.
  - c. 1018-60. Bhoja Pawār, king of Mālwa.
  - c. 1023. Incursion of Rājendra Chola into Bengal.
  - Dec. 1023—April 1026. Somnāth expedition of Sultan Mahmūd.
  - 1030. Death of Sultan Mahmūd.
  - 1038. Atīsa sent on Buddhist mission to Tibet by Nayapāla, king of Bengal.
  - c. 1040-1100. Kirtivarman, Chandēl king.
  - c. 1100-60. Govindachandra, Gaharwār, king of Kanauj.
  - c. 1158-70. Ballāl Sen (Vallāla Sena), king of part of Bengal.
  - 1182. Parmāl Chandēl defeated by Rājā Prithirāj Chauhan.
  - 1192. Defeat and death of Prithirāj.

#### AUTHORITIES

Full references are given in *E. H. I.*<sup>3</sup> A few supplementary ones are in the foot-notes to this chapter.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE KINGDOMS OF THE PENINSULA

##### SECTION 1. THE DECCAN PROPER AND MYSORE.

**Groups of states.** The mediaeval history of the peninsula concerns itself chiefly with those of two groups of states, namely, the kingdoms of the Deccan plateau lying between the Nerbādā on the north and the Krishnā and Tungabhadrā on the south, and those beyond those rivers. Mysore, which belongs geographically to the Far South, having been generally more closely connected with the Deccan kingdoms than with the Tamil states, may be treated as an annexe of the Deccan proper. The history of the Tamil group of kingdoms—Pāndya, Chera, Chola, and Pallava—forms a distinct subject. The Deccan proper, Mysore

or the Kanarese country, and Tamilakam or Tamil Land were constantly in close touch one with the other, but the points of contact between the peninsular powers and those of northern India were few.

**Difficulties of the subject.** Although modern research has had much success in piecing together the skeleton of peninsular history, it is not often possible to clothe the dry bones with the flesh of narrative. The greater part of the results of painstaking, praise-worthy, and necessary archaeological study must always remain unattractive to the ordinary reader of history and extremely difficult to remember. The names of the sovereigns and other notables of southern India present peculiar obstacles in the path of the student of history. They are often terribly long, and each king commonly is mentioned by several alternative cumbersome names or titles which are extremely confusing.<sup>1</sup> Names, too, frequently recur in the lists and are liable to be misunderstood. The kingdoms, moreover, were so completely isolated from the outer world that their history in detail can never possess more than local interest. For those reasons, to which others might be added, the story of the mediæval southern kingdoms is even less manageable than that of the northern realms, which is sufficiently perplexing. In this chapter no attempt will be made to narrate consecutively the history of any of the dynasties, the treatment being confined to summary notices of a few leading powers and personages, coupled with observations on the changes which occurred in religion, literature, and art in the course of the centuries. Notwithstanding the political isolation of the South, religious and philosophical movements originated in that region which profoundly affected the thought of the North. The influence exercised by Rāmānuja and other southern sages on the whole country from Cape Comorin to the recesses of the Snowy Mountains is the best evidence of that inner unity of Hindu India which survives the powerful disintegrating forces set in motion by diversity in blood, language, manners, customs, and political allegiance.

**Early mediæval history.** The history of the Deccan for a considerable time subsequent to the disappearance of the Āndhra power early in the third century A. C. is extremely obscure. Our information concerning Mysore or the Kanarese country is somewhat fuller than that available for the Deccan proper, and two dynasties which fill a large space in the publications of the archaeologists may receive passing notice.

**Kadambas.** A clan or family called Kadamba enjoyed independent power in the districts now called North and South Kanara and in western Mysore from the third to the sixth century. Their capital Banavāsi, also known as Jayanti or Vijayanti, was so ancient that it is mentioned in the edicts of Asoka. The Kadambas

<sup>1</sup> e. g., an inscription mentions a man called Mēdini Mīsara Gandakāt-tāri, Trinetra-Sāluva Narasana Nāyaka; and the King Pulakēśin Chalukya I appears also as Satyāsraya, Ranavikrama, and Vallabha. No author who meddles largely with such names can expect to be read.

resembled several other royal families of distinction in being of Brahman descent, although recognized as Kshatriyas by reason of their occupation as rulers. Kadamba chiefs in subordinate positions may be traced as late as the beginning of the fourteenth century, and the powerful Rāyas of Vijayanagar, who founded a great kingdom early in that century, are supposed by some authorities to have had Kadamba connexions.

**Gangas.** A still more distinguished dynasty was that of the Gangas, who ruled over the greater part of Mysore from the second to the eleventh century, and played an important part in the incessant mediæval wars. The Gangas of the tenth century were



FACE OF GOMATA, SRAVANA BELGOLA.

zealous patrons of Jainism, which had a long history in the peninsula from the fourth century B. C. The colossal statue of Gomata, 56½ feet in height, wrought out of a block of gneiss on the top of an eminence at Sravana Belgola, and justly described as being unrivalled in India for daring conception and gigantic dimensions, was executed in about A. D. 983 to the order of Chāmunda Rāya, the minister of a Ganga king.<sup>1</sup>

A branch of the Gangas ruled in Orissa for about a thousand years from the sixth to the sixteenth century.

**Early Chalukyas.** The most prominent of the early mediæval dynasties in the Deccan was that of the Chalukyas, founded in the middle of the sixth century by Pulakesin I, who established himself as lord of Vātāpi or Bādāmi, now in the Bijāpur District, of the Bombay Presidency.<sup>2</sup> His grandson, Pulakesin II (608-42),

<sup>1</sup> Two similar but smaller colossi of much later date exist at Kārakala or Kārakala and Yenūr in South Kanara. For the former see *H. F. A.*, pl. III.

<sup>2</sup> The Chalukyas adopted the figure of a boar as their emblem, which was borrowed later by the Rāyas of Vijayanagar and other dynasties.

was almost exactly the contemporary of Harsha of Kanauj (606-47), and in the Deccan occupied a paramount position similar to that enjoyed in northern India by his rival. When Harsha, about A.D. 620, sought to bring the Deccan under his dominion, Pulakesin was too strong for him and repelled his attack, maintaining the Narbadā as the frontier between the two empires. The court of the sovereign of the Deccan was visited in A.D. 641 by Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, who was much impressed by the power of Pulakesin, and the loyalty of his warlike vassals. The capital probably was at or near Nāsik, and the traveller experienced much difficulty in penetrating the robber-infested jungles of the Western Ghāts. Even then the country was known as Mahā-rāshtra, as it is now. The Buddhist monasteries in the kingdom

numbered more than a hundred with a population of monks exceeding five thousand. A large proportion of the inhabitants of the realm did not follow the Buddhist religion. Hiuen Tsang gives a brief and indistinct account of the Ajantā caves, which he seems to have visited. Most of the excellent sculptures and paintings in the caves had then been completed.

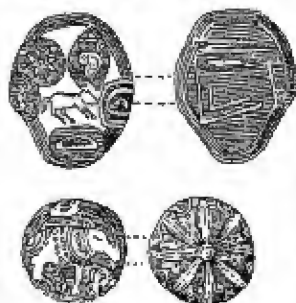
The fame of Pulakesin extended even to distant Persia, whose king exchanged embassies with him. The intercourse with Persia is commemorated in the cave frescoes.

The loyal valour of the chieftains of the Deccan did not avail to save

their lord from ruin. Only a year after Hiuen Tsang's visit the Chalukya king was utterly defeated and presumably slain by the Pallava king of Kāñchī (642), named Narasimhavarman, who thus became the paramount power in the peninsula. The acts of the conqueror will be noticed more particularly as part of the story of the Pallavas.

Thirteen years later (655) a son of Pulakesin revenged his father's death and captured Kāñchī. The conflict between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas continued for many years, with varying fortune, until the middle of the eighth century (753), when a Rāshtrakūta or Ratta chieftain overthrew the reigning Chalukya. The sovereignty of the Deccan, which had been held by the Chalukyas for some two hundred years, thus passed to the Rāshtrakūtas in whose hands it remained for nearly two centuries and a quarter.

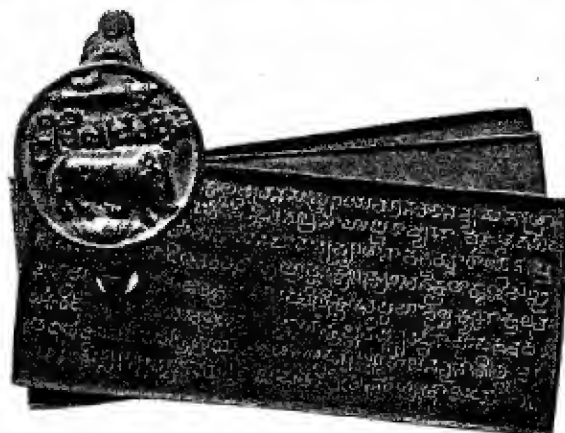
**Chalukyas and Rāshtrakūtas.** The Chalukya or Solanki princes, although provided by obsequious Brahmans with a first-class Hindu pedigree going back to the hero Rāma of Ajodhya, really were of foreign origin, and belonged to the Hūna-Gurjara group of invading tribes. The Rāshtrakūtas or Rattas seem to have been indigenous, and naturally were hostile to the foreigners.



Punch-marked coin.  
Early Chalukya coin.

Usually, although not always, the Rājput clans of foreign descent were opposed to the clans formed from indigenous tribes.

**Religion.** The early Chalukya kings, while tolerant of all religions, like most Indian rulers, were themselves Brahmanical Hindus. In their time Buddhism slowly declined, while the sacrificial form of Hinduism grew in favour, and became the subject of numerous treatises. Handsome temples were erected in many places, and the practice of excavating cave-temples was borrowed by orthodox Hindus from their Jain and Buddhist rivals. The sixth-century Brahmanical caves at Bādāmi contain excellent sculptures in good preservation. The Jain creed had many followers in the Southern Marāṭhā country.



A COPPER-PLATE GRANT.

It is needless to detail the wars of the Rāshtrakūtas. The reign of Krishna I (acc. c. A.D. 760) is memorable for the rock-cut temple called Kailāsa at Ellora, now in the Nizam's Dominions, which is one of the most marvellous works of human labour. The whole temple, hewn out of the side of a hill and enriched with endless ornament, stands clear as if built in the ordinary way.

**Amoghavarsha.** King Amoghavarsha (c. 815-77) enjoyed one of the longest reigns recorded in history. Sulaimān, the Arab merchant who travelled in western India in the middle of the ninth century, knew the Rāshtrakūta sovereign by his title of Balharā, a corruption of Vallabha Rāi, and states that he was acknowledged not only as the most eminent of the princes of India, but also as the fourth of the great monarchs of the world, the other three being the Khalif (Caliph) of Baghdad, the emperor of China, and the emperor of Rūm or Constantinople. The Rāshtrakūta kings kept on the best of terms with the Arabs of Sind, and enriched

their subjects by encouraging commerce. Amoghavarsha possessed multitudes of horses and elephants, with immense wealth, and maintained a standing army regularly paid. His capital was Mānyakheta, now Mālkhēd in the Nizam's Dominions. He adopted the Jain religion and showed marked favour to learned Jains of the Digambara or nude sect. The rapid progress of Jainism in the Deccan during the ninth and tenth centuries involved a decline in the position of Buddhism.

**Chalukyas of Kalyāni.** In A.D. 973 the second Chalukya dynasty, with its capital at Kalyāni, was founded by Taila or Tailapa II, who dethroned the last of the Rāshtrakūtas. The kings of the new dynasty fought numerous wars with their neighbours. At the beginning of the eleventh century the Chalukya country was cruelly ravaged by Rājārāja the Great, the Chola king, who threw into it a vast host of hundreds of thousands of merciless soldiers, by whom even Brahmans, women, and children were not spared.

In A.D. 1052 or 1053 Somesvara Chalukya defeated and slew Rājādhirāja, the then reigning Chola king, in a famous battle fought at Koppam on the Krishnā.<sup>1</sup>

**Vikramānka.** Vikramānka or Vikramāditya, who reigned from A.D. 1076 to 1126, was the most conspicuous member of his dynasty. He secured his throne by a war with one brother, and later in life had to fight another brother who rebelled. He continued the perennial wars with the southern powers, the Cholas in that age having taken the place of the Pallavas and become the lords of Kānchī, which Vikramānka is said to have occupied more than once. His success in war with his neighbours was so marked that he ventured to found an era bearing his name, which never came into general use. His exploits in war, the chase, and love are recorded at great length in an historical poem composed by Bilhana, his chief pundit, a native of Kashmīr. The poem, which recalls Bāna's work on the deeds of Harsha, was discovered by Bühler in a Jain library, and well edited and analysed by him. It is interesting to note that Vikramānka was chosen by one of his consorts as her husband at a public *swayamvara* in the ancient epic fashion.

The celebrated jurist, Vijnānesvara, author of the *Mitākshara*, the leading authority on Hindu law outside of Bengal, lived at Kalyāni in the reign of Vikramānka, whose rule appears to have been prosperous and efficient.

**Bijjala Kalachurya.** During the twelfth century the Chalukya power declined, and after 1190 the Rājās sank into the position of petty chiefs, most of their possessions passing into the hands of new dynasties, the Yādavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra.

A rebel named Bijjala Kalachurya and his sons held the Chalukya throne for some years. Bijjala abdicated in 1167.

**The Lingāyat sect.** His brief tenure of power was marked by

<sup>1</sup> Fleet (*Ep. Ind.* xli, 208), correcting an earlier identification of the battle-field, as in *E. H. I.*, p. 431.

the rise of the Lingāyat or Vira Saiva sect, which is still powerful in the Kanarese country, especially among the trading classes. The members of the sect worship Siva in his phallic (*lingam*) form, reject the authority of the Vedas, disbelieve in the doctrine of rebirth, object to child-marriage, approve of the remarriage of widows, and cherish an intense aversion to Brahmans, notwithstanding that the prophet of their creed was Basava, alleged to have been a Brahman minister of Bijjala, and said by some to have been originally a Jain. The sect when established displayed bitter hostility to Jainism.

**Vishnuvardhana Hoysala.** The Hoysala or Poysala kings of the Mysore territory were descended from a petty chieftain in the Western Ghāts, and first rose to importance in the time of Bittideva or Bittiga, better known by his later name of Vishnuvardhana, who died in A. D. 1141,<sup>1</sup> after a reign of more than thirty years, more or less in subordination to the Chalukya power. The Hoysalas did not become fully independent until about A. D. 1190. Bittiga engaged in wars of the usual character, which need not be specified, and so extended his dominions; but his substantial claim to remembrance rests on the important part played by him in the religious life of the peninsula and on the wonderful development of architecture and sculpture associated with his name and the names of his successors. Bittiga in his early days was a zealous Jain and encouraged his minister Gangarāja to restore the Jain temples which had been destroyed by Chola invaders of the Saiva persuasion. In those days, although many, perhaps most, Rājās practised the normal Hindu tolerance, political wars were sometimes embittered by sectarian passion, and serious persecution was not unknown. The destruction of Jain temples by the Cholas was an act of fierce intolerance. About the close of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century Bittiga came under the teaching of the famous sage Rāmānuja, who converted him to faith in Vishnu. The king then adopted the name of Vishnuvardhana and devoted himself to the honouring of his new creed by the erection of temples of unsurpassed magnificence. The current Vaishnava story that Vishnuvardhana ground the Jain theologians in oil-mills certainly is not true. The statement seems to be merely a picturesque version of the defeat of the Jain disputants in argument. Good evidence proves that the converted king continued to show toleration for various forms of religion. One of his wives and one of his daughters professed the Jain creed.

**Hoysala style of art.** The style of the temples built by Vishnuvardhana and his successors in the twelfth and thirteenth century, which was used alike by Jains and Brahmanical Hindus, should be termed Hoysala, not Chalukyan as in Fergusson's book.<sup>2</sup> It is characterized by a richly carved base or plinth, supporting the temple, which is polygonal, star-shaped in plan, and roofed by a low pyramidal tower, often surmounted by a vase-shaped

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Rice in *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, p. 529.



ornament. In many cases there are several towers, so that the temple may be described as double, triple, or quadruple. The whole of a Hoysala building is generally treated as the background for an extraordinary mass of complicated sculpture, sometimes occurring in great sheets of bas-reliefs, and generally comprising many statues or statuettes, almost or wholly detached. The temple at Halebīd or Dorasamudra, described by Fergusson, is the best known, but many others equally notable exist. Much of the sculpture is of high quality. It was the work of a large school of artists, scores of whom, contrary to the usual Indian practice, have recorded their names on their creations. Artistic skill is not yet dead in Mysore.<sup>1</sup>

**Rāmānuja.** Rāmānuja, the celebrated Vaishnava philosopher and teacher, who converted the Hoysala king, was educated at Kānchi, and resided at Srīrangam near Trichinopoly in the reign of Adhirājendra Chola; but owing to the hostility of that king, who professed the Saiva faith, was obliged to withdraw into Mysore, where he resided until the decease of Adhirājendra freed him from anxiety. He then returned to Srīrangam, where he remained until his death. The exact chronology of his long life is not easy to determine. His death may be placed about the middle of the twelfth century. His system of metaphysics or ontology based on his interpretation of the Upanishads is too abstruse for discussion or analysis in these pages. He is regarded as the leading opponent of the views of Sankarāchārya.<sup>2</sup>

**The later Hoysalas.** Vīra Ballāla, grandson of Vishnuvardhana, extended the dominions of his house, especially in a northerly direction, where he encountered the Yādavas of Devagiri (A.D. 1191-2). His conquests made the Hoysalas the most powerful dynasty in the Deccan at the close of the twelfth century. Their short-lived dominion was shattered in 1310 by the attack of Malik Kāfūr and Khwāja Hājī, the generals of Alāu-d dīn Khiljī, who ravaged the kingdom and sacked the capital, Dorasamudra or Halebīd, which was finally destroyed by a Muhammadan force a few years later, in 1326 or 1327. After that date the Hoysalas survived for a while as merely local Rājās.

**Yādavas of Devagiri.** The Yādavas of Devagiri or Deogiri, known in later ages as Aurangābād, were descendants of feudatory nobles of the Chalukya kingdom. In the closing years of the twelfth century, as mentioned above, they were the rivals of the Hoysalas. The most influential member of the dynasty was Singhana early in the thirteenth century, who invaded Gujarāt and other regions, establishing a considerable dominion which lasted only for a few years. In 1294 the reigning Rājā was attacked by Alāu-d dīn Khiljī, who carried off an enormous amount of treasure. In 1309 Rāmachandra, the last independent sovereign of the Deccan, submitted to Malik Kāfūr. His son-in-law,

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Ant.*, 1915, pp. 89 foll.

<sup>2</sup> For an abstract of the doctrine see *Srī Rāmānujāchārya*, part ii, by T. Rajagopala Chariar, Madras, Natesan & Co., n.d.

Harapāla, having ventured to revolt against the foreigner, paid the penalty by being slayed alive at the order of his barbarous conqueror (1318). That tragedy was the end of the Yādavas.

The story of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar, which was founded about 1336, and developed into an extensive empire to the south of the Krishnā, will be related with considerable detail in a later chapter in connexion with the southern Muhammadan dynasties.

## SECTION 2. THE TAMIL POWERS OF THE FAR SOUTH.

**Origin of the Pallavas.** At the close of chapter 3 of Book II we took a passing glance at the early history of the Tamil kingdoms during the first and second centuries of the Christian era. It is impossible to construct anything like a continuous narrative until a date much later.

After the time of Karikāla Chola and Gajabāhu of Ceylon the power which appears first on the stage of history is that of the Pallavas. In the middle of the fourth century Samudragupta encountered a Pallava king of Kāñchī or Conjeeveram, and it is not unlikely that the dynasty may have originated in the third century after the disappearance of the Āndhras.

The Pallavas constitute one of the mysteries of Indian history. The conjecture that they were Pahlavas, that is to say Parthians or Persians from the north-west, was suggested solely by a superficial verbal similarity and may be summarily dismissed as baseless. Everything known about them indicates that they were a peninsular race, tribe, or clan, probably either identical or closely connected with the Kurumbas, an originally pastoral people, who play a prominent part in early Tamil tradition. The Pallavas are sometimes described as the 'foresters', and seem to have been of the same blood as the Kallars, who were reckoned as belonging to the formidable predatory classes, and were credited up to quite recent times with 'bold, indomitable, and martial habits'. The present Rājā of Pudukottai, the small Native State lying between the Trichinopoly, Tanjore, and Madura Districts, is a Kallar and claims the honour of descent from the Pallava princes. He has abandoned the habits of his forefathers and is a respectable ruler of the modern type, guided by the counsels of the Collector of Trichinopoly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to Srinivasa Aiyangar, who writes with ample local knowledge, the Pallavas belonged to the ancient Nāga people, who included a primitive Negrito element of Australasian origin and a later mixed race. Their early habitat was the Tondai mandalam, the group of districts round Madras; Tanjore and Trichinopoly being later conquests. The Pallava army was recruited from the martial tribe of Pallis or Kurumbas. The Pallava chiefs were the hereditary enemies of the three Tamil kings, and were regarded as intruders in the southern districts. Hence the term Pallava in Tamil has come to mean 'a rogue', while a section of the Pallava subjects who settled in the Chola and Pāndya countries became known

The history of the Pallavas, although alluded to in some vernacular writings, had been almost wholly forgotten by everybody, and was absolutely unknown to Europeans before 1840, when inscriptions of the dynasty began to come to light. Since that date the patient labours of many investigators have recovered much of the outline of Pallava history and have restored the dynasty to its rightful place in Indian history, a place by no means insignificant.

**Limits of the Tamil states.** The normal limits of the territories of the three ancient ruling races of the Tamil country were defined by immemorial tradition and well recognized, although the actual frontiers of the kingdoms varied continually and enormously from time to time.

The Pāndya kingdom, as defined by tradition, extended from the Southern Vellāra river (Pudukottai) on the north to Cape Comorin, and from the Coromandel (*Chola-mandala*) coast on the east to the 'great highway', the Achchhankōvil Pass leading into Southern Kērala, or Travancore. It comprised the existing Districts of Madura and Tinnevely with parts of the Travancore State.

The Chola country, according to the most generally received tradition, extended along the Coromandel coast from Nellore to Pudukottai, where it abutted on the Pāndya territory. On the west it reached the borders of Coorg. The limits thus defined include Madras with several adjoining Districts, and a large part of the Mysore State. But the ancient literature does not carry the Tamil Land farther north than Pulicat and the Venkata or Tirupathī Hill, about 100 miles to the north-west of Madras. In the middle of the seventh century, when Hsuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, travelled, the Pallavas held most of the Chola traditional territory, and the special Chola principality was restricted to a small and unhealthy area, nearly coincident with the Cuddapah District.

The Chera or Kērala territory consisted in the main of the rugged region of the Western Ghāts to the south of the Chandragiri river, which falls into the sea not far from Mangalore, and forms the boundary between the peoples who severally speak Tulu and Malayālam.

No such traditional limits are attributed to the dominions of the Pallavas, although their early habitat, the Tondainādu, comprising the districts near Madras, was well known. They held as much territory as they could grasp, and Kānchī or Conjeeveram, their capital, was in the heart of *Chola-mandalam*. The facts indicate that they overlay the ancient ruling powers, and must have acquired their superior position by means of violence and blackmail, as the Marāthā freebooters did in the eighteenth century.

as Kallar or 'thieves'. All these people doubtless belonged to the Nāga race. Those statements support the view expressed in the text, as formulated many years ago. See Jouveau-Dubreuil, *The Pallavas*, Pondicherry, 1917.

**Outline of Pallava history.** For about two hundred years from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the eighth century the Pallavas were the dominant power in the Far South. All the princes of the ancient royal families seem to have been more or less subordinate to them in that period. Simhavishnu Pallava, in the last quarter of the sixth century, recorded a boast that he had vanquished the Pāndya, Chola, and Chera kings, as well as the ruler of Ceylon.

In the time of their glory the home territories of the Pallavas comprised the modern Districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, Chingleput or Madras, Trichinopoly, and Tanjore; while their sovereignty extended from the Narbadā and Orissan frontier on the north to the Ponnaiyār or Southern Pennār river on the south, and from the Bay of Bengal on the east to a line drawn through Salem, Bangalore, and Berar on the west.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Pallavas had to cede the Vengī province between the Krishnā and the Godāvārī to the Chalukyas early in the seventh century, and never recovered it, that century was the time in which they attained their highest point of fame and during which they raised the imperishable monuments which constitute their best claim to remembrance. At the close of the ninth century the sceptre passed definitely from the hands of the Pallavas into those of the Cholas.

Having thus outlined the general course of Pallava history, we proceed to more definite chronicling and to a brief account of Pallava achievements.

**Mahendra-varman.** Mahendra-varman I (c. A.D. 600–25), son and successor of the victorious King Simhavishnu mentioned above, is memorable for his public works, which include rock-cut temples and caves, the ruined town of Mahendravādi between Arcot and Arcot, and a great reservoir near the same. About A.D. 610 he was defeated by Pulakesin II Chalukya, who wrested from him the province of Vengī, where a branch Chalukya dynasty was established which endured for centuries.

**Narasimha-varman.** Mahendra's successor, Narasimha-varman (c. A.D. 625–45), was the most successful and distinguished member of his able dynasty. In A.D. 642 he took Vatāpi (Bādāmi), the Chalukya capital, and presumably killed Pulakesin II, thus putting an end to the rule of the Early Chalukyas, and making the Pallavas the dominant power not only in Tamil Land, but also in the Deccan for a short time.

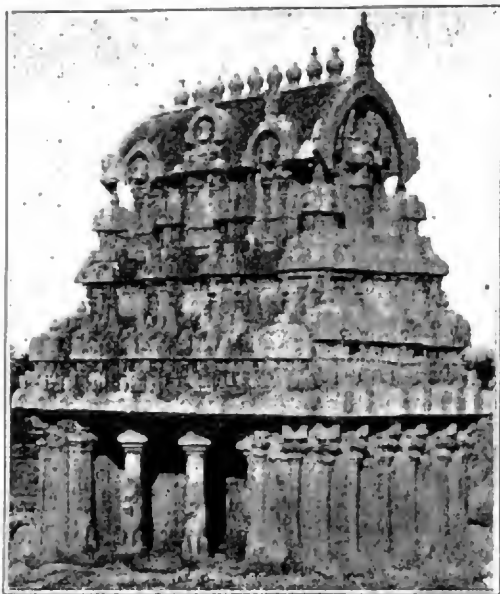
**Hiuen Tsang at Kānchī.** Two years before that victory Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, had visited Kānchī, which seems to have been the southern terminus of his travels. Civil war in Ceylon prevented him from crossing over to that country.

<sup>1</sup> I. G. (1908), s. v. Chingleput District. Trichinopoly and Tanjore were not included in the Tondai nādu.



? Pallava coin.

His observations on the island and on the Pāndya territory were based on information collected at Kāñchī. The pilgrim does not mention the king's name, nor does he use the term Pallava. To him the kingdom of Kāñchī was simply Dravida or the Tamil country. He notes that the soil was fertile and well cultivated, and credits the inhabitants with the virtues of courage, trustworthiness, public spirit, and love of learning. The language, whether spoken or written, differed from that of the north. It was Tamil then as now. The capital of Malakotta, or the Pāndya



GANESA RATHA.

country, presumably Madura, was a city five or six miles in circumference. A modern observer much admired the plan of Kāñchī :

'Here', Professor Geddes writes, 'is not simply a city made monumental by great temples and rich and varied innumerable minor ones ; what rejoices me is to find the realization of an exceptionally well-grouped and comprehensive town plan, and this upon a scale of spacious dignity, combined with individual and artistic freedom to which I cannot name any equally surviving parallel whether in India or elsewhere.'<sup>1</sup>

That testimony to the good taste of the architect of Pallava times is supported by the excellence of the buildings and sculpture. The kingdom contained more than a hundred

<sup>1</sup> *Town Planning of Ancient Dekhan*, p. 78, by C. P. Venkatarama Aiyar, Madras, 1916.

Buddhist monasteries occupied by over ten thousand monks of the Sthavira school, while non-Buddhist temples, chiefly those of the nude Jain sect, were nearly as numerous. Certain buildings were ascribed to Asoka. The Buddhist edifices seem to have been taken over and modified or reconstructed by the Hindus, and so have mostly escaped notice.

In 1915 Mr. T. A. Gopinātha Rao, after a few hours' search, discovered five large images of Buddha in Conjeeveram, two being in the Hindu temple of Kāmākshī.<sup>1</sup> Further investigation will assuredly disclose many traces of Buddhism in the Pallava country.



MUKTESVARA TEMPLE, KANCHI.

**Pallava art.** Narasimha founded the town of Māraṇḍapuram or Mahābalipuram and caused the execution of the wonderful Rathas, or 'Seven Pagodas' at that place, each of which is cut out from a great rock boulder. His artists also wrought the remarkable relief sculptures in the rocks at the same place. The most notable of those works is the celebrated composition which, as commonly stated, depicts the Penance of Arjuna. The alternative explanation, although plausible, seems to be erroneous.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ind. Ant.*, 1915, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Pallava Antiquities*, i, 75. In *H. F. A* (1911), p. 222, pl. xlv, I followed the older interpretation, which appears to be correct (*Ind. Ant.*, 1917, pp. 54-7).

The sculptures were continued by Narasimha's successor, but had to be abandoned incomplete about A.D. 670 in consequence of the Chalukya attacks.

The splendid and numerous structural temples at Kānchī and other places are slightly later in date, and were mostly erected in the reign of Rājasimha in the early years of the eighth century.

It thus appears that the history of Indian architecture and sculpture in the south begins at the close of the sixth century under Pallava rule. Earlier works, which were executed in impermanent materials, necessarily have perished. It is impossible here to go further into details, but it may be said that the Pallava school of architecture and sculpture is one of the most important and interesting of the Indian schools. The transition from wood to stone effected for northern India under Asoka in the third century B.C. was delayed for nearly a thousand years in the Far South. That fact is a good illustration of the immense length of the course of Indian history and of the extreme slowness with which changes have been effected so as ultimately to cover the whole country.

**End of the Pallavas.** A severe defeat inflicted in A.D. 740 on the reigning Pallava king by the Chalukya may be regarded as the beginning of the end of the Pallava supremacy. The heirs of the Pallavas, however, were not the Chalukyas, who had to make way for the Rāshtrakūtas in A.D. 753, but the Cholas, who, in alliance with the Pāndyas, inflicted a decisive defeat on the Pallavas at the close of the ninth century. Pallava chiefs continued to exist as local rulers down to the thirteenth century, and nobles bearing the name may be traced even later. But after the seventeenth century all trace of the Pallavas as a distinct race or clan disappears, and their blood is now merged in that of the Kallar, Palli, and Vellāla castes.

There is every reason to believe that future historians will be able to give a fairly complete narrative of the doings of the Pallava kings, and that the mystery which surrounds their origin and affinities may be elucidated in large measure. The brief notice of the subject in this place may be concluded by a few words on the history of religion during the Pallava rule.

**Religion.** The earliest king who can be precisely dated, and who ruled in the fifth century, certainly was a Buddhist. The later kings were mostly Brahmanical Hindus, some being specially devoted to the cult of Vishnu, and others to that of Siva. Mahendra, who originally was a Jain, was converted to the faith of Siva by a famous Tamil saint, and, with the proverbial zeal of a convert, destroyed the large Jain monastery in South Arcot, which bore the name of Pātaliputtiram, transferred at an early date from the ancient capital of India. The testimony of Hiuen Tsang proves that in the seventh century the nude or Dīgambara sect of Jains was numerous and influential, and his language implies that the various sects lived together peaceably as a rule, although exceptions may have occurred. The prevailing form of religion throughout the Pallava country in modern times is Saiva.

**Parāntaka I Chola.** The Chola chronology is known with

accuracy from A.D. 907, the date of the accession of Parāntaka I, son and successor of Āditya, the conqueror of the Pallavas. Parāntaka, who reigned for forty-two years, was an ambitious warrior king, and among other achievements drove the Pāndya king into exile, captured Madura his capital, and invaded Ceylon. Wars between the Tamil sovereigns and the rulers of Ceylon were almost incessant. The events are recorded in a multitude of Indian inscriptions as well as in the chronicles of the island.

**Rājarāja the Great.** The most prominent of the Chola monarchs were Rājarāja-deva the Great, who came to the throne in A.D. 985, and his son Rājendra Choladeva I, whose reign ended in A.D. 1035. The interval of fifty years covers the period of the most decisive Chola supremacy over the other Tamil powers. The Pāndyas, who never admitted willingly the pretensions of their rivals, which they long resisted, were forced to submit more or less completely to their overlordship.

The exploits of both Rājarāja and his at least equally aggressive son are celebrated in innumerable inscriptions beginning from the eighth year of Rājarāja, whose earliest conquest was that of the Chera kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

His conquests on the mainland up to his fourteenth year comprised the Eastern Chalukya kingdom of Vengī, which had been wrested from the Pallavas at the beginning of the seventh century, Coorg, the Pāndya country, and large areas in the table-land of the Deccan. During subsequent years he subdued Quilon or Kollam on the Malabar coast, Kalinga, and Ceylon. About A.D. 1005 he sheathed the sword and spent the rest of his days in peace. During his declining years he associated the Crown Prince with him in the government, according to the current practice of the southern dynasties.<sup>2</sup> Rājarāja possessed a powerful navy and annexed a large number of islands, probably including the Laccadives and Maldives. When he passed away, he left to his son substantially the whole of the modern Madras Presidency, except Madura and Tinnevely.

**Rājendra Choladeva I.** Rājendra Choladeva I carried his arms even further than his father had done. He sent a fleet across the Bay of Bengal, and thus effected the temporary occupation of Pegu, as well as of the Andaman and Nicobar islands. He even ventured on an expedition to the north, about A.D. 1023, and defeated Mahipāla, the Pāla king of Bihār and Bengal. In commemoration of that exploit he assumed the title of Gangai-konda, and built in the Trichinopoly District a new capital city



Coin of Rājarāja.

<sup>1</sup> Not of the Chera fleet, as in *E. H. I.*, p. 465. The correction is due to T. A. Gopinātha Rao in *Travancore Archaeol. Ser.*, vol. ii, pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup> That practice accounts for sundry discrepancies in the accession dates.



called Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, adorned by a magnificent palace, a gigantic temple, and a vast artificial lake. The ruins, which have never been properly described or illustrated, have been much damaged by spoliation for building material.

**The later Cholas.** The death of Rājendra's son, Rājādhirāja, on the battle-field of Koppam in A. D. 1052 or 1053, when fighting the Chalukya, has been already mentioned. Ten years later the Chalukyas were defeated in their turn in another hard-fought contest.

King Adhirājendra, who was assassinated in A. D. 1074, has been named as having been the enemy of the sage Rāmānuja. Rājendra Kulottunga I, the successor, but not the son of Adhirājendra, was the most conspicuous of the later Cholas, who are known as Chalukya-Cholas, because of their relationship with the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. Rājendra, who reigned for forty-nine years, effected extensive conquests, and also directed an elaborate revision of the revenue survey of his dominions in A. D. 1086, the year of the survey for the Anglo-Norman Domesday Book.

During the thirteenth century the Chola power gradually declined, and later in that century the Pāndya kings reasserted themselves and shook off the Chola yoke.

The Muhammadan inroad in 1310 and the subsequent rise of the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar extinguished the ancient Chola dynasty with its institutions.

**Chola administration.** The administration of the Chola kingdom was highly systematized and evidently had been organized in very ancient times. Our definite knowledge of the details rests chiefly upon inscriptions dated between A. D. 800 and 1300. Certain records of Parāntaka I supply particularly full information about the actual working of the village assemblies during the first half of the tenth century. The whole fabric of the administration rested upon the basis of the village, or rather of unions of villages. It was usually found more convenient to deal with a group or union of villages (*kūrram*) rather than with a single village as the administrative unit. Each *kūrram* or union managed its local affairs through the agency of an assembly (*mahasabha*), which possessed and exercised extensive powers subject to the control of the royal officers (*adhikarin*). The assembly was elected by an elaborate machinery for casting lots, and the members held office for one year. Each union had its own local treasury, and enjoyed full control over the village lands, being empowered even to sell them in certain contingencies. Committees were appointed to look after tanks, gardens, justice, and other departments.

A certain number of *kūrrams* or unions constituted a District (*nādu*), a group of Districts formed a *kōttam* or Division, and several Divisions formed a province. The kingdom was divided into six provinces. That specially designated as *Chola-mandalam* was roughly equivalent to the Tanjore and Trichinopoly Districts.

The theoretical share of the gross produce claimed by the state as land revenue was one-sixth, but petty imposts in great variety were levied, and the total demand has been estimated as four-

fifteenths. It may well have been often much more. Payment could be made either in kind or in gold. The currency unit was the gold *kāsu*, weighing about 28 grains Troy. Silver coin was not ordinarily used in the south in ancient times. The lands were regularly surveyed, and a standard measure was recorded.

Details concerning the military organization are lacking. A strong fleet was maintained. Irrigation works were constructed on a vast scale and of good design. The embankment of the artificial lake at Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, for instance, was sixteen miles in length, and the art of throwing great dams or 'anicutts' across the Kāveri (Cauvery) and other large rivers was thoroughly understood. Various public works of imposing dimensions were designed and erected. The single block of stone forming the summit of the steeple of the Tanjore temple is 25½ feet square, and is estimated to weigh 80 tons. According to tradition it was brought into position by being moved up an incline four miles long. It seems that forced labour was employed on such works. The principal roads were carefully maintained. The particulars thus briefly summarized give an impression that the administrative system was well thought out and reasonably efficient. The important place given to the village assemblies assured the central government of considerable popular support, and individuals probably submitted readily to the orders of their fellow villagers who had the force of public opinion behind them. The system appears to have died out along with the Chola dynasty early in the fourteenth century, and ever since that distant time has been quite extinct. While it is obvious that a dead institution of such antiquity cannot be revived in its old form, it is permissible to regret that modern conditions present so many difficulties in the way of utilizing village assemblies.

**Chola art.** The story of South Indian art, meaning by that term architecture and sculpture, because no paintings to signify have survived,<sup>1</sup> is of special interest, inasmuch as the art appears to be wholly of native growth, untouched by foreign influence, and to have moved slowly through a long course of natural evolution. The early works of art, executed in impermanent materials, have perished utterly and cannot be described. But beyond all doubt they existed in large numbers and were the foundation of more enduring works. The artists who designed the Pallava temples and wrought the sculptures on the rocks of Māmallapuram were not novices. They had served their apprenticeship, and when the call came to them to express their ideas in imperishable forms of stone they brought to bear on the new problem the skill acquired by generations of practice. The art of the Chola period is the continuation of that of Pallava times. No violent break separates the two stages. The changes which occurred took place gradually by a process of spontaneous development.

The earliest Chola temple described hitherto is that at Dādā-

<sup>1</sup> M. Jouveau-Dubreuil has noted some faint traces of Pallava frescoes. A fine series of paintings executed in the fifth century exists at Sigiriya in Ceylon (*H. F. A.*, plates lviii-ix).

puram in the South Arcot District dating from the tenth century. The best known examples of Chola architecture, the huge temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, are slightly later in date. Their design pleases the eye because the lofty tower over the shrine dominates the whole composition. In later Chola art the central shrine was reduced to insignificance, while endless labour was lavished on mighty *gopurams* or gateways to the temple enclosure, as at Chidambaram. The result, although imposing, is unsatisfying.

The Hindu temples of Ceylon seem to belong to the school of the earlier Cholas, as exemplified in comparatively small buildings.

The figure sculpture in the panels of the Gangaikonda-Cholapuram temple is of high quality and recalls the best work in Java. Similar sculptures are to be seen elsewhere.

**Religion.** The Chola kings, apparently without exception, were votaries of the god Siva, but as a rule were tolerant of the other sects in the normal Indian manner. Sometimes, however, they violated the good custom, as when a Chola army destroyed the Jain temples in the Hoysala country, and a Chola king drove Rāmānuja into exile.



Pāndya coin.

The dynasty is said to have patronized Tamil literature.

**The Pāndya kingdom.** The remaining Tamil powers—the Pāndya and Chera—require little notice. In the seventh century, Hiuen Tsang,

who did not personally visit the Pāndya country, gives no information about the character of the government, nor does he name the capital, which must have been Madura. The Pāndya Rājā at that time presumably was tributary to the Pallavas of Kāंची. Buddhism was almost extinct, the ancient monasteries being mostly in ruins. He was informed that near the east side of the capital the remains of the monastery and *stūpa* built by Asoka's brother, Mahendra, were still visible.<sup>1</sup> It is to be feared that search for the site is not now likely to be successful. No attempt has been made so far to trace Buddhist monuments in the Pāndya kingdom. Hindu temples were then numerous, and the nude Jain sect had multitudes of adherents.

**Persecution of the Jains.** Very soon after Hiuen Tsang's stay in the south, the Jains of the Pāndya kingdom suffered a terrible persecution at the hands of the king variously called Kūna, Sundara, or Nedumāran Pāndya, who originally had been a Jain and was converted to faith in Siva by a Chola queen. He signalized his change of creed by atrocious outrages on the Jains who refused to follow his example. Tradition avers that eight thousand of them were impaled. Memory of the fact has been preserved in various ways, and to this day the Hindus of Madura, where the

<sup>1</sup> I think it probable that Mahendra undertook the conversion of Ceylon from his base at Madura, and not at all in the manner described in the Buddhist ecclesiastical legends.

tragedy took place, celebrate the anniversary of 'the impalement of the Jains' as a festival (*utsava*).<sup>1</sup>

**The later Pāndyas.** The Pāndya chiefs fought the Pallavas without ceasing, and at the close of the ninth century joined the Cholas in inflicting on their hereditary enemies a decisive defeat. The Pāndyas also engaged frequently in war with Ceylon. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries they were obliged unwillingly to submit to the Chola suzerainty, but in the thirteenth century they regained a better position, and might be considered the leading Tamil power when the Muhammadan attacks began in 1310. After that time they gradually sank into the position of mere local chiefs.

**Marco Polo's visit.** A glimpse of the Pāndya kingdom in the days of its revival is obtained from the pages of the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who visited Kāyal on the Tāmraparni twice, in 1288 and 1293. That town was then a busy and wealthy port, frequented by crowds of ships from the Arabian coast and China, in one of which the Venetian arrived. He describes Kāyal (Caël) as 'a great and noble city', where much business was done. The king possessed vast treasures and wore upon his person the most costly jewels. He maintained splendid state, showed favour to merchants and foreigners so that they were glad to visit his city, and administered his realm with equity.

In consequence of the gradual elevation of the land, Old Kāyal is now two or three miles from the sea. Traces of ancient habitations may be discerned for miles, but the site is occupied only by a few miserable fishermen's huts.<sup>2</sup> It would be difficult to find a more striking example of the vicissitudes of fortune. Many ruined buildings must be hidden beneath the sands, but no serious attempt to excavate the locality has been made. Several Jain statues have been noticed both at Kāyal and at the still more ancient neighbouring site of Korkai.

**The Chera kingdom.** Little is known about the details of the mediaeval history of the Chera kingdom, which was subject to the more powerful members of the Chola dynasty. The conquest was the first military operation on a large scale undertaken in the reign of Rājārāja Chola, about A.D. 990. The kingdom ordinarily included the greater part of the modern Travancore State. Village assemblies exercised extensive powers, as in the Chola territory. The Kollam or Malabar era of A.D. 824-5, as commonly used in inscriptions, seems to mark the date of the foundation of Kollam or Quilon.



Chera coin.

<sup>1</sup> T. A. Gopinātha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. i, Introd., p. 55; Madras, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Ind. Ant.*, vi, 80-3, 215.

## SELECTED DATES

- A. D.
- c. 600-25. Mahendra-varman Pallava (cave-temples, &c.).
  - 608-42. Pulakesin II Chalukya.
  - c. 610. Eastern Chalukya dynasty of Vengi founded.
  - c. 620. Defeat of Harsha of Kanauj by Pulakesin.
  - c. 625-45. Narasimha-varman Pallava (*rathas*, reliefs, &c.).
  - Kūna (alias Sundara or Nedumāran) Pāndya, who impaled the Jains, was contemporary.
  - 640. Hiuen Tsang at Kānchi.
  - 641. Hiuen Tsang at the court of Pulakesin.
  - 642. Defeat and deposition of Pulakesin by Narasimha-varman Pallava.
  - 740. Defeat of Pallavas by Chalukyas.
  - 753. Overthrow of Early Chalukyas by the Rāshtrakūtas or Rattas.
  - c. 760. Krishna I Rāshtrakūta, acc.; Kailāsa temple at Ellora.
  - c. 815-77. Amoghavarsha Rāshtrakūta.
  - 907. Parāntaka I Chola, acc.
  - 973. Tāila founded Second Chalukya Dynasty of Kalyāni.
  - c. 983. Colossal Jain statue at Sravana Belgola.
  - 985. Rājārāja Chola, acc.
  - c. 1023. Expedition of Rājendra Choladeva to Bengal.
  - 1052 or 1053. Battle of Koppam; Cholas defeated by Chalukyas.
  - 1076-1126. Vikramānka or Vikramāditya Chalukya.
  - c. 1110-41. Bittiga or Vishnu-vardhana Hoysala; Rāmānuja.
  - c. 1160-7. Bijjala usurper; Lingāyat sect founded.
  - 1288, 1293. Marco Polo visited Kāyal.
  - 1310. Invasion by Malik-Kāfūr.
  - 1318. Harapāla Yādava slayed alive.
  - 1326-7. Destruction of Dorasamudra and the Hoysala power.
  - 1336. Foundation of Vijayanagar.

## AUTHORITIES.

Most of the necessary references are given in the foot-notes and in *E. H. I.*<sup>2</sup> (1914); but the recent publications of Prof. G. JOUVEAU-DUBREUIL, of the College, Pondicherry, which are not well known, deserve prominent notice:

1. *Archéologie du Sud de l'Inde*; Tomes I et II; Paris, Geuthner, 1914;
2. *Pallava Antiquities* (in English); vol. i; London, Probsthain, 1916;
3. *Dravidian Architecture* (in English); Madras, S.P.C.K. Press, 1917;
4. *The Pallavas* (in English), 87 pp.; Pondicherry; sold by the author, 1917. An important work.

The learned Professor's studies are characterized by penetrating insight, scientific method, and convincing logic.

Another valuable treatise is *Tamil Studies* by M. SRINIVASA AIYANGAR; Madras, Guardian Press, 1914. Many of the author's views are disputable, and the quotations in Tamil character are somewhat excessive, but much may be learned from the book. The *Travancore Archaeological Series* in progress since 1910 contains a great mass of useful facts. One of the latest disquisitions is a short paper, 'The Early Cholas', by H. KRISHNA SASTRI in *Ann. Rep. A. S., India*, for 1913-14 (Calcutta, 1917).

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*Ci.*, city; *co.*, country; *k.*, king; *km.*, kingdom; *r.*, river; *t.*, town; *vi.*, village.

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